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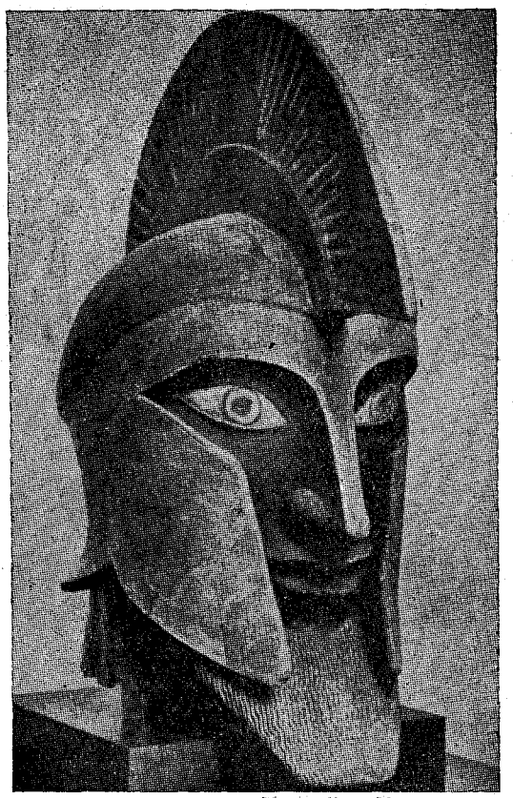

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THE ILIAD

or, The Poem of Force

by Simone Weil

Translated by Mary McCarthy

THE true hero, the true subject, the center of the *Iliad* is force. Force employed by man, force that enslaves man, force before which man's flesh shrinks away. In this work, at all times, the human spirit is shown as modified by its relations with force, as swept away, blinded, by the very force it imagined it could handle, as deformed by the weight of the force it submits to. For those dreamers who considered that force, thanks to progress, would soon be a thing of the past, the *Iliad* could appear as an historical document; for others, whose powers of recognition are more acute and who perceive force, today as yesterday, at the very center of human history, the *Iliad* is the purest and the loveliest of mirrors.

To define force—it is that *x* that turns anybody who is subjected to it into a *thing*. Exercised to the limit, it turns man into a thing in the most literal sense: it makes a corpse out of him. Somebody was here, and the next minute there is nobody here at all; this is a spectacle the *Iliad* never wearies of showing us:

> *. . . the horses*
> *Rattled the empty chariots through the files of battle,*
> *Longing for their noble drivers. But they on the ground*
> *Lay, dearer to the vultures than to their wives.*

The hero becomes a *thing* dragged behind a chariot in the dust:

> *All around, his black hair*
> *Was spread; in the dust his whole head lay,*
> *That once-charming head; now Zeus had let his enemies*
> *Defile it on his native soil.*

The bitterness of such a spectacle is offered us absolutely

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undiluted. No comforting fiction intervenes; no consoling prospect of immortality; and on the hero's head no washed-out halo of patriotism descends.

His soul, fleeing his limbs, passed to Hades,
Mourning its fate, forsaking its youth and its vigor.

Still more poignant—so painful is the contrast—is the sudden evocation, as quickly rubbed out, of another world: the faraway, precarious, touching world of peace, of the family, the world in which each man counts more than anything else to those about him.

She ordered her bright-haired maids in the palace
To place on the fire a large tripod, preparing
A hot bath for Hector, returning from battle.
Foolish woman! Already he lay, far from hot baths,
Slain by grey-eyed Athena, who guided Achilles' arm.

Far from hot baths he was indeed, poor man. And not he alone. Nearly all the *Iliad* takes place far from hot baths. Nearly all of human life, then and now, takes place far from hot baths.

Here we see force in its grossest and most summary form—the force that kills. How much more varied in its processes, how much more surprising in its effects is the other force, the force that does *not* kill, i.e., that does not kill just yet. It will surely kill, it will possibly kill, or perhaps it merely hangs, poised and ready, over the head of the creature it *can* kill, at any moment, which is to say at every moment. In whatever aspect, its effect is the same: it turns a man into a stone. From its first property (the ability to turn a human being into a thing by the simple method of killing him) flows another, quite prodigious too in its own way, the ability to turn a human being into a thing while he is still alive. He is alive; he has a soul; and yet—he is a thing. An extraordinary entity this—a thing that has a soul. And as for the soul, what an extraordinary house it finds itself in! Who can say what it costs it, moment by moment, to accommodate itself to this residence, how much writhing and bending, folding and pleating are required of it? It was not made to live inside a thing; if it does so, under pressure of necessity, there is not a single element of its nature to which violence is not done.

A man stands disarmed and naked with a weapon pointing at him; this person becomes a corpse before anybody or anything touches him. Just a minute ago, he was thinking, acting, hoping:

Motionless, he pondered. And the other drew near,
Terrified, anxious to touch his knees, hoping in his heart
To escape evil death and black destiny . . .
With one hand he clasped, suppliant, his knees,
While the other clung to the sharp spear, not letting go . . .

Soon, however, he grasps the fact that the weapon which is pointing at him will not be diverted; and now, still breathing, he is simply matter; still thinking, he can think no longer:

Thus spoke the brilliant son of Priam
In begging words. But he heard a harsh reply:
He spoke. And the other's knees and heart failed him.
Dropping his spear, he knelt down, holding out his arms.
Achilles, drawing his sharp sword, struck
Through the neck and breastbone. The two-edged sword
Sunk home its full length. The other, face down,
Lay still, and the black blood ran out, wetting the ground.

IF a stranger, completely disabled, disarmed, strengthless, throws himself on the mercy of a warrior, he is not, by this very act, condemned to death; but a moment of impatience on the warrior's part will suffice to relieve him of his life. In any case, his flesh has lost that very important property which in the laboratory distinguishes living flesh from dead—the galvanic response. If you give a frog's leg an electric shock, it twitches. If you confront a human being with the touch or sight of something horrible or terrifying, this bundle of muscles, nerves, and flesh likewise twitches. Alone of all living things, the suppliant we have just described neither quivers nor trembles. He has lost the right to do so. As his lips advance to touch the object that is for him of all things most charged with horror, they do not draw back on his teeth—they cannot:

No one saw great Priam enter. He stopped,
Clasped the knees of Achilles, kissed his hands,
Those terrible man-killing hands that had slaughtered so many of his sons.

The sight of a human being pushed to such an extreme of suffering chills us like the sight of a dead body:

As when harsh misfortune strikes a man if in his own country
He has killed a man, and arrives at last at someone else's door,
The door of a rich man; a shudder seizes those who see him.
So Achilles shuddered to see divine Priam;
The others shuddered too, looking one at the other.

But this feeling lasts only a moment. Soon the very presence of the suffering creature is forgotten:

He spoke. The other, remembering his own father, longed to weep;
Taking the old man's arm, he pushed him away.
Both were remembering. Thinking of Hector, killer of men,
Priam wept, abased at the feet of Achilles.
But Achilles wept, now for his father,
Now for Patroclus. And their sobs resounded through the house.

It was not insensibility that made Achilles with a single movement of his hand push away the old man who had

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been clinging to his knees; Priam's words, recalling his own old father, had moved him to tears. It was merely a question of his being as free in his attitudes and movements as if, clasping his knees, there were not a suppliant but an inert object. Anybody who is in our vicinity exercises a certain power over us by his very presence, and a power that belongs to him alone, that is, the power of halting, repressing, modifying each movement that our body sketches out. If we step aside for a passer-by on the road, it is not the same thing as stepping aside to avoid a billboard; alone in our rooms, we get up, walk about, sit down again quite differently from the way we do when we have a visitor. But this indefinable influence that the presence of another human being has on us is not exercised by men whom a moment of impatience can deprive of life, who can die before even thought has a chance to pass sentence on them. In their presence, people move about as if they were not there; they, on their side, running the risk of being reduced to nothing in a single instant, imitate nothingness in their own persons. Pushed, they fall. Fallen, they lie where they are, unless chance gives somebody the idea of raising them up again. But supposing that at long last they have been picked up, honored with cordial remarks, they still do not venture to take this resurrection seriously; they dare not express a wish lest an irritated voice return them forever to silence:

He spoke; the old man trembled and obeyed.

AT least a suppliant, once his prayer is answered, becomes a human being again, like everybody else. But there are other, more unfortunate creatures who have become things for the rest of their lives. Their days hold no pastimes, no free spaces, no room in them for any impulse of their own. It is not that their life is harder than other men's nor that they occupy a lower place in the social hierarchy; no, they are another human species, a compromise between a man and a corpse. The idea of a person's being a thing is a logical contradiction. Yet what is impossible in logic becomes true in life, and the contradiction lodged within the soul tears it to shreds. This thing is constantly aspiring to be a man or a woman, and never achieving it—here, surely, is death but death strung out over a whole lifetime; here, surely, is life, but life that death congeals before abolishing.

This strange fate awaits the virgin, the priest's daughter:

I will not give her up. Sooner shall old age come upon her
In our house in Argos, far from her native land,
Tending the loom and sharing my bed.

It awaits the young wife, the young mother, the prince's bride:

And perhaps one day, in Argos, you will weave cloth for another,
And the Messeian or Hyperian water you will fetch,
Much against your will, yielding to a harsh necessity.

It awaits the baby, heir to the royal scepter:

Soon they will be carried off in the hollow ships,
I with them. And you, my child, will either go with me,
To a land where you will work at wretched tasks,
Laboring for a pitiless master. . . .

In the mother's eyes, such a fate is, for her child, as terrible as death; the husband would rather die than see his wife reduced to it; all the plagues of heaven are invoked by the father against the army that subjects his daughter to it. Yet the victims themselves are beyond all this. Curses, feelings of rebellion, comparisons, reflections on the future and the past, are obliterated from the mind of the captive; and memory itself barely lingers on. Fidelity to his city and his dead is not the slave's privilege.

And what does it take to make the slave weep? The misfortune of his master, his opressor, despoiler, pillager, of the man who laid waste his town and killed his dear ones under his very eyes. This man suffers or dies; *then* the slave's tears come. And really why not? This is for him the only occasion on which tears are permitted, are, indeed, required. A slave will always cry whenever he can do so with impunity—his situation keeps tears on tap for him.

She spoke, weeping, and the women groaned,
Using the pretext of Patroclus to bewail their own torments.

Since the slave has no license to express anything except what is pleasing to his master, it follows that the only emotion that can touch or enliven him a little, that can reach him in the desolation of his life, is the emotion of love for his master. There is no place else to send the gift of love; all other outlets are barred, just as, with the horse in harness, bit, shafts, reins bar every way but one. And if, by some miracle, in the slave's breast a hope is born, the hope of becoming, some day, through somebody's influence, *someone* once again, how far won't these captives go to show love and thankfulness, even though these emotions are addressed to the very men who should, considering the very recent past, still reek with horror for them:

My husband, to whom my father and respected mother gave me,
I saw before the city transfixed by the sharp bronze.
My three brothers, children, with me, of a single mother,
So dear to me! They all met their fatal day.
But you did not allow me to weep, when swift Achilles
Slaughtered my husband and laid waste the city of Mynes.
You promised me that I would be taken by divine Achilles,
For his legitimate wife, that he would carry me away in his ships,
To Pythia, where our marriage would be celebrated among the Myrmidons,
So without respite I mourn for you, you who have always been gentle.

To lose more than the slave does is impossible, for he loses his whole inner life. A fragment of it he may get back if he sees the possibility of changing his fate, but this is his only hope. Such is the empire of force, as extensive as the empire of nature. Nature, too, when vital needs are at stake, can erase the whole inner life, even the grief of a mother:

But the thought of eating came to her, when she was tired of tears.

FORCE, in the hands of another, exercises over the soul the same tyranny that extreme hunger does; for it possesses, and *in perpetuo*, the power of life and death. Its

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rule, moreover, is as cold and hard as the rule of inert matter. The man who knows himself weaker than another is more alone in the heart of a city than a man lost in the desert.

Two casks are placed before Zeus's doorsill,
Containing the gifts he gives, the bad in one, the good in the other . . .
The man to whom he gives baneful gifts, he exposes to outrage;
A frightful need drives him across the divine earth;
He is a wanderer, and gets no respect from gods or men.

Force is as pitiless to the man who possesses it, or thinks he does, as it is to its victims; the second it crushes, the first it intoxicates. The truth is, nobody really possesses it. The human race is not divided up, in the *Iliad*, into conquered persons, slaves, suppliants, on the one hand, and conquerors and chiefs on the other. In this poem there is not a single man who does not at one time or another have to bow his neck to force. The common soldier in the *Iliad* is free and has the right to bear arms; nevertheless he is subject to the indignity of orders and abuse:

But whenever he came upon a commoner shouting out,
He struck him with his scepter and spoke sharply:
"Good for nothing! Be still and listen to your betters,
You are weak and cowardly and unwarlike,
You count for nothing, neither in battle nor in council."

Thersites pays dear for the perfectly reasonable comments he makes, comments not at all different, moreover, from those made by Achilles:

He hit him with his scepter on back and shoulders,
So that he doubled over, and a great tear welled up,
And a bloody welt appeared on his back
Under the golden scepter. Frightened, he sat down,
Wiping away his tears, bewildered and in pain.
Troubled though they were, the others laughed long at him.

Achilles himself, that proud hero, the undefeated, is shown us at the outset of the poem, weeping with humiliation and helpless grief—the woman he wanted for his bride has been taken from under his nose, and he has not dared to oppose it:

. . . But Achilles
Weeping, sat apart from his companions,
By the white-capped waves, staring over the boundless ocean.

What has happened is that Agamemnon has deliberately humiliated Achilles, to show that he himself is the master:

. . . So you will learn
That I am greater than you, and anyone else will hesitate
To treat me as an equal and set himself against me.

But a few days pass, and now the supreme commander is weeping in his turn. He must humble himself, he must plead, and have, moreover, the added misery of doing it all in vain.

In the same way, there is not a single one of the combatants who is spared the shameful experience of fear. The heroes quake like everybody else. It only needs a challenge from Hector to throw the whole Greek force into consternation—except for Achilles and his men, and they did not happen to be present:

He spoke and all grew still and held their peace,
Ashamed to refuse, afraid to accept.

But once Ajax comes forward and offers himself, fear quickly changes sides:

A shudder of terror ran through the Trojans, making their limbs weak;
And Hector himself felt his heart leap in his breast.
But he no longer had the right to tremble, or to run away. . . .

Two days later, it is Ajax's turn to be terrified

Zeus the father on high, makes fear rise in Ajax.
He stops, overcome, puts behind him his buckler made of seven hides,
Trembles, looks at the crowd around, like a wild beast. . . .

Even to Achilles the moment comes; he too must shake and stammer with fear, though it is a river that has this effect on him, not a man. But, with the exception of Achilles, every man in the *Iliad* tastes a moment of defeat in battle. Victory is less a matter of valor than of blind destiny, which is symbolized in the poem by Zeus's golden scales:

Then Zeus the father took his golden scales,
In them he put the two fates of death that cuts down all men,
One for the Trojans, tamers of horses, one for the bronze-sheathed Greeks.
He seized the scales by the middle; it was the fatal day of Greece that sank.

By its very blindness, destiny establishes a kind of justice. Blind also is she who decrees to warriors punishment in kind. He that takes the sword, will perish by the sword. The *Iliad* formulated the principle long before the Gospels did, and in almost the same terms:

Ares is just, and kills those who kill.

PERHAPS all men, by the very act of being born, are destined to suffer violence; yet this is a truth to which circumstance shuts men's eyes. The strong are, as a matter of fact, never absolutely strong, nor are the weak absolutely weak, but neither is aware of this. They have in common a refusal to believe that they both belong to the same species: the weak see no relation between themselves and the strong, and vice versa. The man who is the possessor of force seems to walk through a non-resistant element; in the human substance that surrounds him nothing has the power to interpose, between the impulse and the act, the tiny interval that is reflection. Where there is no room for reflection, there is none either for justice or prudence. Hence we see men in arms behaving harshly and madly. We see their sword bury itself in the breast of a disarmed enemy who is in the very act of pleading at their knees. We see them triumph over a dying man by describing to him the outrages his corpse will endure. We see Achilles cut the throats of twelve Trojan boys on the funeral pyre of Patroclus as naturally as we cut flowers for a grave. These men, wielding power, have no suspicion of the fact that the consequences of their deeds will at length come home to them—they too will bow the neck in their turn. If you can make an old man fall silent, tremble, obey, with a single word of your own, why should it occur to you that the curses of this old man, who is after all a priest, will have their own importance in the gods' eyes?

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Why should you refrain from taking Achilles' girl away from him if you know that neither he nor she can do anything but obey you? Achilles rejoices over the sight of the Greeks fleeing in misery and confusion. What could possibly suggest to him that this rout, which will last exactly as long as he wants it to and end when his mood indicates it, that this very rout will be the cause of his friend's death, and, for that matter, of his own? Thus it happens that those who have force on loan from fate count on it too much and are destroyed.

But at the time their own destruction seems impossible to them. For they do not see that the force in their possession is only a limited quantity; nor do they see their relations with other human beings as a kind of balance between unequal amounts of force. Since other people do not impose on their movements that halt, that interval of hesitation, wherein lies all our consideration for our brothers in humanity, they conclude that destiny has given complete license to them, and none at all to their inferiors. And at this point they exceed the measure of the force that is actually at their disposal. Inevitably they exceed it, since they are not aware that it is limited. And now we see them committed irretrievably to chance; suddenly things cease to obey them. Sometimes chance is kind to them, sometimes cruel. But in any case there they are, exposed, open to misfortune; gone is the armor of power that formerly protected their naked souls; nothing, no shield, stands between them and tears.

This retribution, which has a geometrical rigor, which operates automatically to penalize the abuse of force, was the main subject of Greek thought. It is the soul of the epic. Under the name of Nemesis, it functions as the mainspring of Aeschylus's tragedies. To the Pythagoreans, to Socrates and Plato, it was the jumping-off point of speculation upon the nature of man and the universe. Wherever Hellenism has penetrated, we find the idea of it familiar. In Oriental countries which are steeped in Buddhism, it is perhaps this Greek idea that has lived on under the name of Kharma. The Occident, however, has lost it, and no longer even has a word to express it in any of its languages: conceptions of limit, measure, equilibrium, which ought to determine the conduct of life are, in the West, restricted to a servile function in the vocabulary of technics. • We are only geometricians of matter; the Greeks were, first of all, geometricians in their apprenticeship to virtue.

THE progress of the war in the *Iliad* is simply a continual game of seesaw. The victor of the moment feels himself invincible, even though, only a few hours before, he may have experienced defeat; he forgets to treat victory as a transitory thing. At the end of the first day of combat described in the *Iliad*, the victorious Greeks were in a position to obtain the object of all their efforts, i.e., Helen and her riches—assuming of course as Homer did, that the Greeks had reason to believe that Helen was in Troy. Actually, the Egyptian priests, who ought to have known, affirmed later on to Herodotus that she was in Egypt. In any case, that evening the Greeks are no longer interested in her or her possessions:

"For the present, let us not accept the riches of Paris;
Nor Helen; everybody sees, even the most ignorant,
That Troy stands on the verge of ruin."
He spoke, and all the Achaians acclaimed him.

What they want is, in fact, everything. For booty, all the riches of Troy; for their bonfires, all the palaces, temples, houses; for slaves, all the women and children; for corpses, all the men. They forget one detail, that *everything* is not within their power, for they are not in Troy. Perhaps they will be there tomorrow; perhaps not. Hector, the same day, makes the same mistake:

For I know well in my entrails and in my heart,
A day will come when Holy Troy will perish,
And Priam, and the nation of Priam of the good lance.
But I think less of the grief that is in store for the Trojans,
And of Hecuba herself, and of Priam the king,
Ano of my brothers, so numerous and so brave,
Who will fall in the dust under the blows of the enemy,
Than of you that day when a Greek in his bronze breastplate
Will drag you away weeping and deprive you of your liberty.

But as for me, may I be dead, and may the earth have covered me
Before I hear you cry out or see you dragged away!

At this moment what would he not give to turn aside these horrors which he believes to be inevitable? But at this moment nothing he *could* give would be of any use. The next day but one, however, the Greeks have run away miserably, and Agamemnon himself is in favor of putting to the sea again. And now Hector, by making a very few concessions, could readily secure the enemy's departure; yet now he is even unwilling to let them go empty-handed:

Set fires everywhere and let the brightness mount the skies
Lest in the night the long-haired Greeks,
Escaping, sail over the broad back of ocean. . . .
Let each of them take home a wound to heal
. . . thus others will fear
To bring dolorous war to the Trojans, tamers of horses.

His wish is granted; the Greeks stay; and the next day they reduce Hector and his men to a pitiable condition:

As for them—they fled across the plain like cattle
Whom a lion hunts before him in the dark midnight. . . .
Thus the mighty Agamemnon, son of Atreus, pursued them,
Steadily killing the hindmost; and still they fled.

In the course of the afternoon, Hector regains the ascendancy, withdraws again, then puts the Greeks to flight, then is repulsed by Patroclus, who has come in with his fresh troops. Patroclus, pressing his advantage, ends by finding himself exposed, wounded and without armor, to the sword of Hector. And finally that evening the victorious Hector hears the prudent counsel of Polydamas and repudiates it sharply:

Now that wily Kronos's son has given me
Glory at the ships; now that I have driven the Greeks to the sea,
Do not offer, fool, such counsels to the people.
No Trojan will listen to you; nor would I permit it. . . .
So Hector spoke, and the Trojans acclaimed him. . . .

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The next day Hector is lost. Achilles has harried him across the field and is about to kill him. He has always been the stronger of the two in combat; how much the more so now, after several weeks of rest, ardent for vengeance and victory, against an exhausted enemy? And Hector stands alone, before the walls of Troy, absolutely alone, alone to wait for death and to steady his soul to face it:

Alas, were I to slip through the gate, behind the rampart,
Polydamas at once would heap dishonor on me....
And now that through my recklessness I have destroyed my people,
I fear the Trojans and the long-robed Trojan women,
I fear to hear from some one far less brave than I:
"Hector, trusting his own strength too far, has ruined his people."...
Suppose I were to down my bossed shield,
My massive helmet, and, leaning my spear against the wall,
Should go to meet renowned Achilles? ...
But why spin out these fancies? Why such dreams?
I would not reach him, nor would he pity me,
Or respect me. He would kill me like a woman
If I came naked thus. ...

Not a jot of the grief and ignominy that fall to the unfortunate is Hector spared. Alone, stripped of the prestige of force, he discovers that the courage that kept him from taking to the shelter of the walls is not enough to save him from flight:

Seeing him, Hector began to tremble. He had not the heart
To stay ...
... It is not for a ewe nor the skin of an ox,
That they are striving, not these ordinary rewards of the race;
It is for a life that they run, the life of Hector, tamer of horses.

Wounded to death, he enhances his conqueror's triumph by vain supplications:

I implore you, by your soul, by your knees, by your parents. ...

But the auditors of the *Iliad* knew that the death of Hector would be but a brief joy to Achilles, and the death of Achilles but a brief joy to the Trojans, and the destruction of Troy but a brief joy to the Achaians.

THUS violence obliterates anybody who feels its touch. It comes to seem just as external to its employer as to its victim. And from this springs the idea of a destiny before which executioner and victim stand equally innocent, before which conquered and conqueror are brothers in the same distress. The conquered brings misfortune to the conqueror, and vice versa:

A single son, short-lived, was born to him.
Neglected by me, he grows old—for far from home
I camp before Troy, injuring you and your sons.

A moderate use of force, which alone would enable man to escape being enmeshed in its machinery, would require superhuman virtue, which is as rare as dignity in weakness. Moreover, moderation itself is not without its perils, since prestige, from which force derives at least three quarters of its strength, rests principally upon that marvelous indifference that the strong feel toward the weak, an indifference so contagious that it infects the very people who are the objects of it. Yet ordinarily excess is not arrived at through prudence or politic considerations. On the contrary, man dashes to it as to an irresistible temptation. The voice of reason is occasionally heard in the mouths of the characters in the *Iliad*. Thersites' speeches are reasonable to the highest degree; so are the speeches of the angry Achilles:

Nothing is worth my life, not all the goods
They say the well-built city of Ilium contains. ...
A man can capture steers and fatted sheep
But, once gone, the soul cannot be captured back.

But words of reason drop into the void. If they come from an inferior, he is punished and shuts up; if from a chief, his actions betray them. And failing everything else, there is always a god handy to advise him to be unreasonable. In the end, the very idea of wanting to escape the role fate has allotted one—the business of killing and dying—disappears from the mind:

We to whom Zeus
Has assigned suffering, from youth to old age,
Suffering in grievous wars, till we perish to the last man.

Already these warriors, like Craonne's so much later, felt themselves to be "condemned men."

IT was the simplest trap that pitched them into this situation. At the outset, at the embarkation, their hearts are light, as hearts always are if you have a large force on your side and nothing but space to oppose you. Their weapons are in their hands; the enemy is absent. Unless your spirit has been conquered in advance by the reputation of the enemy, you always feel yourself to be much stronger than anybody who is not there. An absent man does not impose the yoke of necessity. To the spirits of those embarking no necessity yet presents itself; consequently they go off as though to a game, as though on holiday from the confinement of daily life.

Where have they gone, those braggadocio boasts
We proudly flung upon the air at Lemnos,
Stuffing ourselves with flesh of horned steers,
Drinking from cups brimming over with wine?
As for Trojans—a hundred or two each man of us
Could handle in battle. And now one is too much for us.

But the first contact of war does not immediately destroy the illusion that war is a game. War's necessity is terrible, altogether different in kind from the necessity of peace. So terrible is it that the human spirit will not submit to it so long as it can possibly escape; and whenever it can escape it takes refuge in long days empty of necessity, days of play, of revery, days arbitrary and unreal. Danger then becomes an abstraction; the lives you destroy are like toys broken by a child, and quite as incapable of feeling; heroism is but a theatrical gesture and smirched with boastfulness. This becomes doubly true if a momentary access of vitality comes to reinforce the divine hand that wards off defeat and death. Then war is easy and basely, coarsely loved.

But with the majority of the combatants this state of mind does not persist. Soon there comes a day when fear,

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or defeat, or the death of beloved comrades touches the warrior's spirit, and it crumples in the hand of necessity. At that moment war is no more a game or a dream; now at last the warrior cannot doubt the reality of its existence. And this reality, which he perceives, is hard, much too hard to be borne, for it enfolds death. Once you acknowledge death to be a practical possibility, the thought of it becomes unendurable, except in flashes. True enough, all men are fated to die; true enough also, a soldier may grow old in battles; yet for those whose spirits have bent under the yoke of war, the relation between death and the future is different than for other men. For other men death appears as a limit set in advance on the future; for the soldier death *is* the future, the future his profession assigns him. Yet the idea of man's having death for a future is abhorrent to nature. Once the experience of war makes visible the possibility of death that lies locked up in each moment, our thoughts cannot travel from one day to the next without meeting death's face. The mind is then strung up to a pitch it can stand for only a short time; but each new dawn reintroduces the same necessity; and days piled on days make years. On each one of these days the soul suffers violence. Regularly, every morning, the soul castrates itself of aspiration, for thought cannot journey through time without meeting death on the way. Thus war effaces all conceptions of purpose or goal, including even its own "war aims." It effaces the very notion of war's being brought to an end. To be outside a situation so violent as this is to find it inconceivable; to be inside it is to be unable to conceive its end. Consequently, nobody does anything to bring this end about. In the presence of an armed enemy, what hand can relinquish its weapon? The mind ought to find a way out, but the mind has lost all capacity to so much as look outward. The mind is completely absorbed in doing itself violence. Always in human life, whether war or slavery is in question, intolerable sufferings continue, as it were, by the force of their own specific gravity, and so look to the outsider as though they were easy to bear; actually, they continue because they have deprived the sufferer of the resources which might serve to extricate him.

Nevertheless, the soul that is enslaved to war cries out for deliverance, but deliverance itself appears to it in an extreme and tragic aspect, the aspect of destruction. Any other solution, more moderate, more reasonable in character, would expose the mind to suffering so naked, so violent that it could not be borne, even as memory. Terror, grief, exhaustion, slaughter, the annihilation of comrades —is it credible that these things should not continually tear at the soul, if the intoxication of force had not intervened to drown them? The idea that an unlimited effort should bring in only a limited profit or no profit at all is terribly painful.

What? Will we let Priam and the Trojans boast
Of Argive Helen, she for whom so many Greeks
Died before Troy, far from their native land?
What? Do you want us to leave the city, wide-
streeted Troy,
Standing, when we have suffered so much for it?

But actually what is Helen to Ulysses? What indeed is Troy, full of riches that will not compensate him for Ithaca's ruin? For the Greeks, Troy and Helen are in reality mere sources of blood and tears; to master them is to master frightful memories. If the existence of an enemy has made a soul destroy in itself the thing nature put there, then the only remedy the soul can imagine is the destruction of the enemy. At the same time the death of dearly loved comrades arouses a spirit of somber emulation, a rivalry in death:

May I die, then, at once! Since fate has not let me
Protect my dead friend, who far from home
Perished, longing for me to defend him from death.
So now I go to seek the murderer of my friend,
Hector. And death shall I find at the moment
Zeus wills it —
Zeus and the other immortals.

It is the same despair that drives him on toward death, on the one hand, and slaughter on the other:

I know it well, my fate is to perish here,
Far from father and dearly loved mother;
but meanwhile
I shall not stop till the Trojans have had their fill
of war.

The man possessed by this twofold need for death belongs, so long as he has not become something still different, to a different race from the race of the living.

What echo can the timid hopes of life strike in such a heart? How can it hear the defeated begging for another sight of the light of day? The threatened life has already been relieved of nearly all its consequence by a single, simple distinction: it is now unarmed; its adversary possesses a weapon. Furthermore, how can a man who has rooted out of himself the notion that the light of day is sweet to the eyes respect such a notion when it makes its appearance in some futile and humble lament?

I clasp tight your knees, Achilles. Have a thought,
have pity for me.
I stand here, O son of Zeus, a suppliant, to be
respected.
In your house it was I first tasted Demeter's bread,
That day in my well-pruned vineyard you caught me
And sold me, sending me far from father and friends,
To holy Lemnos; a hundred oxen was my price.
And now I will pay you three hundred for ransom.
This dawn is for me my twelfth day in Troy,
After so many sorrows. See me here, in your hands,
Through some evil fate. Zeus surely must hate me
Who again puts me into your hands. Alas, my poor
mother, Laothoe,
Daughter of the old man, Altes—a short-lived son
you have borne.

What a reception this feeble hope gets!

Come, friend, you too must die. Why make a fuss
about it?
Patroclus, he too has died—a far better man than
you are.
Don't you see how handsome I am, how mighty?
A noble father begat me, and I have a goddess for
mother.
Yet even I, like you, must some day encounter my
fate,
Whether the hour strikes at noon, or evening, or
sunrise,
The hour that comes when some arms-bearing warrior
will kill me.

To respect life in somebody else when you have had to castrate yourself of all yearning for it demands a truly

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heart-breaking exertion of the powers of generosity. It is impossible to imagine any of Homer's warriors being capable of such an exertion, unless it is that warrior who dwells, in a peculiar way, at the very center of the poem—I mean Patroclus, who "knew how to be sweet to everybody," and who throughout the *Iliad* commits no cruel or brutal act. But then how many men do we know, in several thousand years of human history, who would have displayed such god-like generosity? Two or three?—even this is doubtful. Lacking this generosity, the conquering soldier is like a scourge of nature. Possessed by war, he, like the slave, becomes a thing, though his manner of doing so is different—over him too, words are as powerless as over matter itself. And both, at the touch of force, experience its inevitable effects: they become deaf and dumb.

SUCH is the nature of force. Its power of converting a man into a thing is a double one, and in its application double-edged. To the same degree, though in different fashions, those who use it and those who endure it are turned to stone. This property of force achieves its maximum effectiveness during the clash of arms, in battle, when the tide of the day has turned, and everything is rushing toward a decision. It is not the planning man, the man of strategy, the man acting on the resolution taken, who wins or loses a battle; battles are fought and decided by men deprived of these faculties, men who have undergone a transformation, who have dropped either to the level of inert matter, which is pure passivity, or to the level of blind force, which is pure momentum. Herein lies the last secret of war, a secret revealed by the *Iliad* in its similes, which liken the warriors either to fire, flood, wind, wild beasts, or God knows what blind cause of disaster, or else to frightened animals, trees, water, sand, to anything in nature that is set into motion by the violence of external forces. Greeks and Trojans, from one day to the next, sometimes even from one hour to the next, experience, turn and turn about, one or the other of these transmutations:

As when a lion, murderous, springs among the cattle
Which by thousands are grazing over some vast marshy field. . . .
And their flanks heave with terror; even so the Achaians
Scattered in panic before Hector and Zeus, the great father.

As when a ravening fire breaks out deep in a bushy wood
And the wheeling wind scatters sparks far and wide,
And trees, root and branch, topple over in flames;
So Atreus' son, Agamemnon, roared through the ranks
Of the Trojans in flight. . . .

The art of war is simply the art of producing such transformations, and its equipment, its processes, even the casualties it inflicts on the enemy, are only means directed toward this end—its true object is the warrior's soul. Yet these transformations are always a mystery; the gods are their authors, the gods who kindle men's imagination. But however caused, this petrifactive quality of force, twofold always, is essential to its nature; and a soul which has entered the province of force will not escape this except by a miracle. Such miracles are rare and of brief duration.

THE wantonness of the conqueror that knows no respect for any creature or thing that is at its mercy or is imagined to be so, the despair of the soldier that drives him on to destruction, the obliteration of the slave or the conquered man, the wholesale slaughter—all these elements combine in the *Iliad* to make a picture of uniform horror, of which force is the sole hero. A monotonous desolation would result were it not for those few luminous moments, scattered here and there throughout the poem, those brief, celestial moments in which man possesses his soul. The soul that awakes then, to live for an instant only and be lost almost at once in force's vast kingdom, awakes pure and whole; it contains no ambiguities, nothing complicated or turbid; it has no room for anything but courage and love. Sometimes it is in the course of inner deliberation that a man finds his soul: he meets it, like Hector before Troy, as he tries to face destiny on his own terms, without the help of gods or men. At other times, it is in a moment of love that men discover their souls—and there is hardly any form of pure love known to humanity of which the *Iliad* does not treat. The tradition of hospitality persists, even through several generations, to dispel the blindness of combat.

Thus I am for you a beloved guest in the breast of Argos . . .
Let us turn our lances away from each other, even in battle.

The love of the son for the parents, of father for son, of mother for son, is continually described, in a manner as touching as it is curt:

Thetis answered, shedding tears,
"You were born to me for a short life, my child, as you say . . ."

Even brotherly love:

My three brothers whom the same mother bore for me,
So dear. . . .

Conjugal love, condemned to sorrow, is of an astonishing purity. Imagining the humiliations of slavery which await a beloved wife, the husband passes over the one indignity which even in anticipation would stain their tenderness. What could be simpler than the words spoken by his wife to the man about to die?

. . . Better for me
Losing you, to go under the earth. No other comfort
Will remain, when you have encountered your death-heavy fate,
Only grief, only sorrow. . . .

Not less touching are the words addressed to a dead husband:

Dear husband, you died young, and left me your widow
Alone in the palace. Our child is still tiny,
The child you and I, crossed by fate, had together.
I think he will never grow up . . .
For not in your bed did you die, holding my hand
And speaking to me prudent words which forever
Night and day, as I weep, might live in my memory.

The most beautiful friendship of all, the friendship between comrades-at-arms, is the final theme of The Epic:

. . . But Achilles
Wept, dreaming of the beloved comrade; sleep, all-prevailing,

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Would not take him; he turned over again and again.

But the purest triumph of love, the crowning grace of war, is the friendship that floods the hearts of mortal enemies. Before it a murdered son or a murdered friend no longer cries out for vengeance. Before it—even more miraculous—the distance between benefactor and suppliant, between victor and vanquishd, shrinks to nothing:

But when thirst and hunger had been appeased,
Then Dardanian Priam fell to admiring Achilles.
How tall he was, and handsome; he had the face of a god;
And in his turn Dardanian Priam was admired by Achilles,
Who watched his handsome face and listened to his words.
And when they were satisfied with contemplation of each other . . .

These moments of grace are rare in the *Iliad,* but they are enough to make us feel with sharp regret what it is that violence has killed and will kill again.

HOWEVER, such a heaping-up of violent deeds would have a frigid effect, were it not for the note of incurable bitterness that continually makes itself heard, though often only a single word marks its presence, often a mere stroke of the verse, or a run-on line. It is in this that the *Iliad* is absolutely unique, in this bitterness that proceeds from tenderness and that spreads over the whole human race, impartial as sunlight. Never does the tone lose its coloring of bitterness; yet never does the bitterness drop into lamentation. Justice and love, which have hardly any place in this study of extremes and of unjust acts of violence, nevertheless bathe the work in their light without ever becoming noticeable themselves, except as a kind of accent. Nothing precious is scorned, whether or not death is its destiny; everyone's unhappiness is laid bare without dissimulation or disdain; no man is set above or below the condition common to all men; whatever is destroyed is regretted. Victors and vanquished are brought equally near us; under the same head, both are seen as counterparts of the poet, and the listener as well. If there is any difference, it is that the enemy's misfortunes are possibly more sharply felt.

So he fell there, put to sleep in the sleep of bronze,
Unhappy man, far from his wife, defending his own people. . . .

And what accents echo the fate of the lad Achilles sold at Lemnos!

Eleven days he rejoiced his heart among those he loved, Returning from Lemnos; the twelfth day, once more,
God delivered him into the hands of Achilles,
To him who had to send him, unwilling, to Hades.

And the fate of Euphorbus, who saw only a single day of war.

Blood soaked his hair, that hair like to the Graces' . . .

When Hector is lamented:

. . . guardian of chaste wives and little children. . . .

In these few words, chastity appears, dirtied by force, and childhood, delivered to the sword. The fountain at the gates of Troy becomes an object of poignant nostalgia when Hector runs by, seeking to elude his doom:

Close by there stood the great stone tanks,
Handsomely built, where silk-gleaming garments
Were washed clean by Troy's lovely daughters and housewives
In the old days of peace, long ago, when the Greeks had not come.
Past these did they run their race, pursued and pursuer.

The whole of the *Iliad* lies under the shadow of the greatest calamity the human race can experience—the destruction of a city. This calamity could not tear more at the heart had the poet been born in Troy. But the tone is not different when the Achaeans are dying, far from home.

Insofar as this other life, the life of the living, seems calm and full, the brief evocations of the world of peace are felt as pain:

With the break of dawn and the rising of the day,
On both sides arrows flew, men fell.
But at the very hour that the woodcutter goes home to fix his meal
In the mountain valleys when his arms have had enough
Of hacking great trees, and disgust rises in his heart,
And the desire for sweet food seizes his entrails,
At that hour, by their valor, the Danaans broke the front.

Whatever is not war, whatever war destroys or threatens, the *Iliad* wraps in poetry; the realities of war, never. No reticence veils the step from life to death:

Then his teeth flew out; from two sides,
Blood came to his eyes; the blood that from lips and nostrils
He was spilling, open-mouthed; death enveloped him in its black cloud.

The cold brutality of the deeds of war is left undisguised; neither victors nor vanquished are admired, scorned, or hated. Almost always, fate and the gods decide the changing lot of battle. Within the limits fixed by fate, the gods determine with sovereign authority victory and defeat. It is always they who provoke those fits of madness, those treacheries, which are forever blocking peace; war is their true business; their only motives, caprice and malice. As for the warriors, victors or vanquished, those comparisons which liken them to beasts or things can inspire neither admiration nor contempt, but only regret that men are capable of being so transformed.

THERE may be, unknown to us, other expressions of the extraordinary sense of equity which breathes through the *Iliad;* certainly it has not been imitated. One is barely aware that the poet is a Greek and not a Trojan. The tone of the poem furnishes a direct clue to the origin of its oldest portions; history perhaps will never be able to tell us more. If one believes with Thucydides that eighty years after the fall of Troy, the Achaeans in their turn were conquered, one may ask whether these songs, with their rare references to iron, are not the songs of a conquered people, of whom a few went into exile. Obliged to live and die, "very far from the homeland," like the Greeks who fell before Troy, having lost their cities like the Trojans, they saw their own image both in the conquerors, who had been their fathers, and in the conquered, whose misery was like their own. They could still see the Trojan war over that brief span of years in its true light, unglossed by pride or shame. They could look at it as conquered and as conquerors simultaneously, and so perceive what neither

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conqueror nor conquered ever saw, for both were blinded. Of course, this is mere fancy; one can see such distant times only in fancy's light.

IN any case, this poem is a miracle. Its bitterness is the only justifiable bitterness, for it springs from the subjection of the human spirit to force, that is, in the last analysis, to matter. This subjection is the common lot, although each spirit will bear it differently, in proportion to its own virtue. No one in the *Iliad* is spared by it, as no one on earth is. No one who succumbs to it is by virtue of this fact regarded with contempt. Whoever, within his own soul and in human relations, escapes the dominion of force is loved but loved sorrowfully because of the threat of destruction that constantly hangs over him.

Such is the spirit of the only true epic the Occident possesses. The *Odyssey* seems merely a good imitation, now of the *Iliad,* now of Oriental poems; the *Aeneid* is an imitation which, however brilliant, is disfigured by frigidity, bombast, and bad taste. The *chansons de geste,* lacking the sense of equity, could not attain greatness: in the *Chanson de Roland,* the death of an enemy does not come home to either author or reader in the same way as does the death of Roland.

Attic tragedy, or at any rate the tragedy of Aeschylus and Sophocles, is the true continuation of the epic. The conception of justice enlightens it, without ever directly intervening in it; here force appears in its coldness and hardness, always attended by effects from whose fatality neither those who use it or those who suffer it can escape; here the shame of the coerced spirit is neither disguised, nor enveloped in facile pity, nor held up to scorn; here more than one spirit bruised and degraded by misfortune is offered for our admiration. The Gospels are the last marvelous expression of the Greek genius, as the *Iliad* is the first: here the Greek spirit reveals itself not only in the injunction given mankind to seek above all other goods, "the kingdom and justice of our Heavenly Father," but also in the fact that human suffering is laid bare, and we see it in a being who is at once is divine and human. The accounts of the Passion show that a divine spirit, incarnate, is changed by misfortune, trembles before suffering and death, feels itself, in the depths of its agony, to be cut off from man and God. The sense of human misery gives the Gospels that accent of simplicity that is the mark of the Greek genius, and that endows Greek tragedy and the *Iliad* with all their value. Certain phrases have a ring strangely reminiscent of the epic, and it is the Trojan lad dispatched to Hades, though he does not wish to go, who comes to mind when Christ says to Peter: "Another shall gird thee and carry thee wither thou wouldst not." This accent cannot be separated from the idea that inspired the Gospels, for the sense of human misery is a pre-condition of justice and love. He who does not realize to what extent shifting fortune and necessity hold in subjection every human spirit, cannot regard as fellow-creatures nor love as he loves himself those whom chance separated from him by an abyss. The variety of constraints pressing upon man give rise to the illusion of several distinct species that cannot communicate. Only he who has measured the dominion of force, and knows how not to respect it, is capable of love and justice.

THE relations between destiny and the human soul, the extent to which each soul creates its own destiny, the question of what elements in the soul are transformed by merciless necessity as it tailors the soul to fit the requirements of shifting fate, and of what elements can on the other hand be preserved, through the exercise of virtue and through grace—this whole question is fraught with temptations to falsehood, temptations that are positively enhanced by pride, by shame, by hatred, contempt, indifference, by the will to oblivion or to ignorance. Moreover, nothing is so rare as to see misfortune fairly portrayed; the tendency is either to treat the unfortunate person as though catastrophe were his natural vocation, or to ignore the effects of misfortune on the soul, to assume, that is, that the soul can suffer and remain unmarked by it, can fail, in fact, to be recast in misfortune's image. The Greeks, generally speaking, were endowed with spiritual force that allowed them to avoid self-deception. The rewards of this were great; they discovered how to achieve in all their acts the greatest lucidity, purity, and simplicity. But the spirit that was transmitted from the *Iliad* to the Gospels by way of the tragic poets never jumped the borders of Greek civilization; once Greece was destroyed, nothing remained of this spirit but pale reflections.

Both the Romans and the Hebrews believed themselves to be exempt from the misery that is the common human lot. The Romans saw their country as the nation chosen by destiny to be mistress of the world; with the Hebrews, it was their God who exalted them and they retained their superior position just as long as they obeyed Him. Strangers, enemies, conquered peoples, subjects, slaves, were objects of contempt to the Romans; and the Romans had no epics, no tragedies. In Rome gladiatorial fights took the place of tragedy. With the Hebrews, misfortune was a sure indication of sin and hence a legitimate object of contempt; to them a vanquished enemy was abhorrent to God himself and condemned to expiate all sorts of crimes—this is a view that makes cruelty permissible and indeed indispensable. And no text of the Old Testament strikes a note comparable to the note heard in the Greek epic, unless it be certain parts of the book of Job. Throughout twenty centuries of Christianity, the Romans and the Hebrews have been admired, read, imitated, both in deed and word; their masterpieces have yielded an appropriate quotation every time anybody had a crime he wanted to justify.

Furthermore, the spirit of the Gospels was not handed down in a pure state from one Christian generation to the next. To undergo suffering and death joyfully was from the very beginning considered a sign of grace in the Christian martyrs—as though grace could do more for a human being than it could for Christ. Those who believe that God himself, once he became man, could not face the harshness of destiny without a long tremor of anguish, should have understood that the only people who can give the impression of having risen to a higher plane, who seem superior to ordinary human misery, are the people who resort to the aids of illusion, exaltation, fanaticism, to conceal the harshness of destiny from their own eyes. The man who does not wear the armor of the lie cannot experience force without being touched by it to the very soul. Grace can prevent this touch from corrupting him, but it cannot spare him the wound. Having forgotten it too

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well, Christian tradition can only rarely recover that simplicity that renders so poignant every sentence in the story of the Passion. On the other hand, the practice of forcible proselytization threw a veil over the effects of force on the souls of those who used it.

In spite of the brief intoxication induced at the time of the Renaissance by the discovery of Greek literature, there has been, during the course of twenty centuries, no revival of the Greek genius. Something of it was seen in Villon, in Shakespeare, Cervantes, Moliere, and — just once — in Racine. The bones of human suffering are exposed in *L'École des Femmes* and in *Phèdre*, love being the context —a strange century indeed, which took the opposite view from that of the epic period, and would only acknowledge human suffering in the context of love, while it insisted on swathing with glory the effects of force in war and in politics. To the list of writers given above, a few other names might be added. But nothing the peoples of Europe have produced is worth the first known poem that appeared among them. Perhaps they will yet rediscover the epic genius, when they learn that there is no refuge from fate, learn not to admire force, not to hate the enemy, nor to scorn the unfortunate. How soon this will happen is another question.

Labor Imperialism - 2 Reports from Britain

(I) The Bank of England Is Socialized

THERE has hardly been a more farcical episode in recent English politics than the behaviour of the London Stock Exchange during the first two months of the Labour Government. But in this tragi-comedy the stockbrokers and their clients have apparently more reason for laughter than the British people. After the "bombshell" of the fall of the Churchill Government and the access to power of an administration pledged to a socialist programme, quotations went steeply downwards—at first almost indiscriminately; but after a few days of panic the decline concentrated on industries with a high "nationalisation priority" while other shares recovered more or less the lost ground. Only a few weeks ago, an improvement in railway shares was attributed by so good a judge of Stock Exchange mentality as the London *Economist* to the fond hopes of the buyers "that in the Labour nationalisation programme transport might have the privilege of being eaten last rather than first."

Bank of England stock slumped on the announcement of the impending nationalisation of the Bank. After repeated assurances of the pleasant relations between the Governor of the Bank, Lord Catto, and the socialist Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Hugh Dalton, investors slowly took courage again, and on the day when the Government's Bill was published, and already in anticipation of this event, Bank of England stock reached its highest level. On the following day, and in full knowledge of the proposed terms, railway share speculators staged a small boom, caused entirely by the hope of similar nationalisation measures for the railroads. Now it is apparently no longer a question of enjoying a short, or not so short, respite before the dread fate of nationalisation, but a stampede of industries eager to join the nationalisation queue. Has there been a complete change of heart on the part of investors and stockbrokers? Is this an expression of their belief in democratic processes which makes them joyfully acquiesce in the verdict of the electorate in favour of socialism? The facts are not quite so melodramatic but even more momentous. *It is not the attitude of the Stock Exchange which has changed but that of the professed opponents of capitalism.* The bewildering reversal in the behaviour of the share market has been entirely due to the terms of compensation of the Bank's stockholders by the Labour Government.

These terms are very simple indeed. Stockholders of the Bank of England have been receiving for years a dividend of 12 per cent on their capital. The Government now intends to issue 3 per cent Government bonds in exchange for Bank stock and to guarantee to the stockholders the same income as before by exchanging £400 of Government bonds for £100 of Bank of England stock. As 3 per cent Government bonds of the approximate type now to be issued to the Bank's stockholders are being quoted at par or at a slight premium, the Government is buying Bank stock at a quotation of 400 or more. Now during 1935-1939 Bank of England stock averaged about 353. The avreage quotation for the five war years, 1940-1944, was approximately 360. Since then the stock has somewhat risen and during the first six months of 1945 it was hovering around 385. After the announcement of Labour's election victory, the quotation fell to 370 and after the honourable mention of the Bank of England in the Government's programme of nationalisation it dropped for a moment to less than 360. Since then it has recovered again to 375 and even 380, until it rose to the record height of 390-395 just before the news of the first instalment of "practical socialism" came out. This means that any time the Government could have bought the Bank's stock in the open market appreciably, and at times very considerably, below the rate which it now proposes to pay. In the schoolboy simplicity of his conversion formula, the socialist Chancellor of the Exchequer disregards a cardinal factor which the Stock Exchange itself has always duly taken into account. Bank of England stock, though highly respectable, had never had the same rating as fully-fledged Government securities and its yield had, therefore, always been somewhat higher than that of Government bonds. This subtle appreciation by the Stock Exchange public of the superior merits of "nationalisation" was apparently lost on the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The terms offered to the Bank may be regarded as the most important decision yet made by the Labour Government and they are bound to have a permanent influence on the success or failure of its nationalisation programme. The importance of the measure is not reduced by the warning that these terms are not to be regarded as a precedent for the nationalisation of the coal and other industries. There

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is every reason to believe that the *principles* applied in this case will be regarded as a precedent, and the Government will have to justify any deviation from them by the most unassailable arguments.

Quite apart from the inexplicable neglect of the difference in actual quotations, which throws an amount of anything between ten and twenty million dollars to the stockholders without any justification whatever, the very principle of equality of income after nationalisation is inadmissible, and particularly so in the case of an undertaking like the Bank of England which owes most of its privileged position to the law of the land and to the fact that it is the banker of the Government. By ignoring this vital fact the Government has accepted the principle that vested interests based on the exploitation of a public function for private purposes shall be perpetuated at the expense of the nation in case of nationalisation.

The Labour Government has not only accepted the full value which the market put upon the "Goodwill" of the Bank but has even gone beyond the market price of the shares. As the Bank's capital and reserves total just over £18 million, the Government has declared its readiness to pay more than £40 millions for the Bank's "goodwill," i.e. its capacity to earn profits which is very largely due to its close relations to the Government. It is easy to see that such a procedure saddles the British nation with an intolerable burden. If industries are acquired at the full value which the owners put on their property, plus a handsome tip for the trouble and disappointment, the Government mortgages the future of the country to the financial interests even more completely than in the past, because it frees them from any fear of losing their capital. *It is, therefore, not surprising that on these terms the Stock Exchange has no objection to measures of nationalisation which mean tangible immediate profits coupled with future security.*

From the point of view of the success of a policy of nationalisation, such a procedure is obviously fatal. "Fair compensation" should plainly include not the accounting value of physical assets but their true value to a going concern, including the value of all genuine hidden reserves and the estimated value of intangible assets as far as the latter embody experiences vital to the efficient running of the industry concerned. But commercial goodwill, which is prominently reflected in share values, also contains the value of commercial advantages, privileges or monopolies which may be vital for the making of high profits at the expense of the public but which cannot be perpetuated without maintaining the economic privileges which it is intended to abolish by nationalisation.

It was almost twenty years ago that Bernard Shaw provoked the violent displeasure of most of his socialist admirers by his *The Apple Cart*. He envisaged a time when England would be run only by Labour Governments but when big business would be more powerful than ever. When ministers who are socialists to the backbone would nationalise industries which had ceased to be profitable but would not "dare even to talk of nationalising any industry, however socially vital, that has a farthing of profit for plutocracy still left in it, or that can be made to yield a farthing for it by subsidies." This was a penetrating remark and it is by no means certain that it is not also a true prophecy. The first step of the Labour Government on the path of economic reconstruction has done nothing to diminish the hold of privilege over English society, and it has established a precedent which may serve as a weapon for its opponents in the impending struggles for the reorganization of Britain's economic life and the redistribution of its national income.

RICARDO

(2) The Dock Strike

THE first post-war national strike has hit England. 30,000 dockers on strike in Merseyside and the North of England have been joined by 17,000 London dockers and stevedores in the fight for 25/— ($6.25) a day and a 40-hour week. Practically the whole of the dock industry has been paralyzed.

Playing on the old "Red" bogey, the press has stressed the "hidden hand" aspect of the strike. The Labour Government, for its part, has already clearly demonstrated its strike-breaking attitude by introducing troops to scab on the workers. The fear of already low rations being reduced even more by the inaction of the dockers has been the *leit-motif* running through the editorials. The accusation of causing food to perish by the holding up of ships was, however, adequately answered by the leader of the strikers who, in an interview to the London *Star* said: "There is no real danger to the food. It is all in refrigerators, and provided the ships are battened down, it will keep for months." There is a deep public resentment against the dockers amongst the population, and the stories put out by the Beaverbrook and Rothermere press of fantastic war-time earnings by the dockers haven't helped any. But one has only to see and speak with these men to realize how inaccurate these stories are.

The strike is of course unofficial, as every strike in England has been since the outbreak of World War No. II. There has been widespread criticism of all the union leaders by the representatives of the strikers. At one meeting attended by over six thousand men, the secretary of the strike committee asked how many of those present were represented by a certain official. Not one hand was raised. As far as the dock-workers are concerned, the union offcials have become part-and-parcel of the whole order against which they are fighting. This is strangely contrasted with a pathetic, naïve faith they have in the Labour Party they helped to elect to power. At another meeting, when one of the leaders called for a vote of confidence in the Labour Government there was not one dissentient. "Our Government" is the rule rather than the exception.

The "hidden hand" mentioned higher up is a reference to the Trotzkyists. The Trotzkyists in England are a party, some 700 strong, whose activities belie their numbers. The captialist press has been at great pains to expose them. Prior to this war, Trotzkyism was unknown in Britain, despite the official existence of a small party and its organ. Two years ago they were "exposed" as the instigators of the Tyne Side Apprentices' Strike. Their sudden build-up to the headlines of the yellow press was a prelude to their detention under the notorious 1927 Trades Dispute Act. This Act was, however, repealed after the cessation of hostilities, together with other anti-workingclass legislation. It now remains to be seen why the Trotzkyists have once more been elevated to the position of Public Enemy No. 1. Possibly, as has been remarked to me, it's just the way of the papers: I suspect that it goes deeper than this though.

The influence of Trotzkyists or any other -ists has been negligible on the dockers. It's quite significant that the women who suffer most in strikes, are strongly behind their menfolk. The men have genuine grievances; they feel that just as they received a dirty deal after the last war, so their employers have put the machinery in action for double-crossing them again. During the war, when they believed they were helping in a battle for democracy, they sweated and were loyal to their jobs to the last man. Now,

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with the drastic cuts in their wages that have followed so that their bosses can retain the high profits made during the war, they have struck.

Here it is pertinent to give some indication of the profits of the owners. The Cunard Steamship Company in the worst year of the war for shipping losses made a profit of £312,127 ($1,560,635); the Cunard White Star, in the same period increased its profits by £40,000 ($200,000) to £659,000 ($3,295,000) and paid half-a-million ($2,500,000) in dividends.

In this strike the dockers have demonstrated outstanding solidarity and understanding of the position of the union hierarchy. The strike committee itself, which is composed entirely of rank-and-file dockers, evokes nothing but praise for its competent handling of its affairs. The strike has been completely orderly and there have been no incidents whatsoever. Whether the workers will continue the self-disciplined support of the unofficial strike committee which they have set up overnight remains to be seen.

MARTIN HASSECK.

ENGLAND, Oct. 22.

The Friend of the Jews

SOME of his best friends are of course jews, and when he reads the frightening accounts of what the nazis have done to the jews, he drops the paper and begins to think. But no matter how hard he thinks, he cannot recall one single instance of his doing anything that could be compared to what the nazis have done; neither could his relatives, nor any of his friends, nor anyone in america. My god, he concludes, aren't we a pretty decent gang of people after all? He recalls the big poster he had seen yesterday on the main road near the drugstore, which read: Isn't it grand to be an american? And he had been incensed by the incongruity of such a poster used to advertise a big laundry company. Now he understands, and indeed, why shouldn't a laundry company say it? Every-one must say it, what the hell. And say it loudly too. In the afternoon he goes to a concert. He doesn't care much about music, but the tickets have been sent him by a jewish matron who does so much for the jews. The conductor is a refugee. Well, that's fine. He applauds like everybody else, and after the others have finished, he is still applauding; his hands burn by now, and he is perspiring; even the most musically-minded concertgoers begin to wonder. But he goes on. It is not applause for the music, they should know that this is his contribution, it's the noise of better understanding, it's that little EXTRA applause that fights the axis and slaps the japs and backs the attacks and rides the tides and tops the cops and makes all the good things of this world rhyme patriotically for a worthy cause. When he sees that everybody is getting a little impatient, he stops, not without looking defiantly around him and saying, so that he may be heard three seats away: This is the way we should all behave. If we had stood together in appreciation of good people in the past, no hitler would be threatening us today. In the evening he goes to a dinner party at the house of a pet enemy of his; that is to say, they are perfectly good friends, but she is so antisemitic that he goes to her just for the fun of fighting her, right in her twenty-two room penthouse trench. When those two get started, say many of their common friends, it's a riot. That night however the friend asks him to avoid the subject for the evening. We shall all be friendly tonight, she says. All right, granted. But right after the grapefruit cup, an amplebreasted matron who has just arrived from Florida begins by screaming that she cannot get a wink of sleep lately, because the jews are getting all the jobs. Up jumps our crusader, throwing an imploring look at the hostess, as if to signify that someone else had broken the armistice. And he states, bluntly, that the jews are very useful people. This gives rise to a wild fight, in which admirals, ambassadors and debutantes relate their most horrid experiences with jews, while two high clergymen, one Episcopalian and one another Episcopalian, murmur to their neighbor with a sobbing voice: isn't it terrible that so much hatred and misunderstanding should arise? What can we do—what can we do? But he stands firm, it's a one-man fight against giants. He speaks of relativity. No, shouts the admiral, relativity has just been proven wrong by a friend of mine in the navy. This almost kills the crusader while of course it pleases the ladies no end, but he comes back with another accomplishment, which unfortunately he throws at the hostess. You should be grateful to them; they identified the spirocete, the bacillus of syphilis. How dare you, how dare you, what do I care, she stutters. This is the limit. Do I care whether syphilis was was discovered by a jew. . . . They all have it. That's right, throws in a professor of romance languages, who firmly believes that the jews have black blood. When the fighting friend of the jews leaves the place, he is still trembling with indignation, and he decides that he will have to get a reference index of all the contributions made by the jews to civilization, so that the next time he will not be caught short of arguments.

NICCOLO TUCCI

THE NATIONAL SCENE

THE ATOMIC ENERGY Commission, soon to be established if Congress, following Truman's recommendations, passes H.R. 4280, will have the power to control all raw materials and manufacturing processes necessary to the development of atomic power. The real significance of this measure appears to have escaped attention, in spite of the furore over the haste with which such an important bill is being pushed through. Control is defined to include the right to purchase. Since most industrial materials and processes may be described as "essential to the development of atomic energy," the 9-man Commission, appointed by the President, subject only to Senate confirmation, would be able to name an Administrator who would thus have the power to nationalize almost the entire economy. What was it Marx said about capitalism being pregnant with a new society?

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INCREASING STATE INTERVENTION in the economy can be discerned in numerous other recent acts of the Truman Administration. Amongst many, we cite: replacement of WPB by CPA; proposed incorporation of WLB in the Labor Department; sponsorship of power projects comparable to TVA for all the major river valleys of the country; support of Federal control of tidewater oil lands; the Full Employment bill; and the increasing role contemplated for the State Department in controlling American foreign trade. These are sufficient to establish Truman as the true heir of Roosevelt. The new aspects of State intervention will offset the liquidation of wartime controls and represent the authentic continuation of the trend that first became marked with the onset of the Great Depression.

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THE ARITHMETIC OF the Administration's proposed

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solution of the wage-price controversy has us somewhat baffled. Wage increases of from 15 to 20 per cent will presumably be the compromise between labor's demand for a 30 per cent increase to offset the decline in take-home pay due to elimination of overtime and capital's reluctance to grant any wage increases at all. Whatever wage increase is officially authorized as a national policy will be compensated by price increases, the theory being that the cost of living will not rise by more than from 3 to 5 per cent. Increases beyond the officially approved wage level may be negotiated, but will be approved only where they can be absorbed; i.e., where they will have no effect on the cost of living.

No one can say with any degree of precision what the relationship of wages is to production costs for the economy as a whole. With all the many varied statistics collected by the Government, this is one set of data that is completely missing, although estimates exist for some industries. The nearest approach we have to such a measure is the wage and salary component of national income, published by the Department of Commerce. Since wages and salaries comprise about 70 per cent of the national income, it is a safe guess that wages on the average constitute at least one-half of total production costs. It would thus appear that a 15-20 per cent wage increase will cause an increase in the cost of living of from 7½-10 per cent, instead of the 3-5 per cent increase claimed by the Administration.

To be sure, increases in productivity would enable manufacturers to absorb a large portion of this increase in wage costs. While wartime increases in productivity have been tremendous, averaging about 6 per cent in real terms during each of the past five years, it is unrealistic to assume that there will be no loss when the national product is once again composed essentially of peacetime output. Much of the wartime increase in productivity, for example, applies to the aircraft industry which, at its peak, employed over two million workers. Most of these will have to find employment in peacetime industries where such startling increases in output per worker cannot be expected.

All this does not invalidate labor's demand for a 30 per cent wage increase. If equities are to be considered, this is clearly a minimum demand and is absolutely justified. The point is that realization of labor's demands, either in whole or in substantial part, will be inflationary unless it is at the expense of profits. The profit margins are there, but under our present system if they are whittled down by anything like the indicated 9 per cent, paralysis would occur. Once again we are face to face with the fact that capitalism must be replaced by socialism if mankind is to have a chance to solve the basic problem of living.

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THE INFLATIONARY PROCESS of war years has been greatly accelerated in the brief interval since the cessation of hostilities. In some countries, like China and Greece, the capacity of printing presses to turn out money had already been taxed to the utmost during the war. Further inflation will mean complete economic collapse and revolution. In other countries, like France and Italy, prices of necessities have been moving up rapidly. The peasants are withholding their crops from market since money buys so little. England is attempting to halt the inflationary process by extending wartime controls for the next five years; with what success remains to be seen. Throughout the world, the one currency that remains firm is the American dollar, a fitting tribute to the preeminent position of American imperialism in the post-World War II era.

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THE MEAGER QUANTITIES of food, clothing, materials and machinery that UNRRA has been able to send to the countries in dire need are at best designed to keep body and soul together. Should rapid inflation take place on a scale comparable to that which followed the last war, the termination of the UNRRA-aid period, scheduled to take place by the end of 1946 in Europe and by March, 1947 in the Far East, will still see the war devastated countries completely prostrate. And this UNNRA program is dependent on the voting of an additional one per cent of national income by the contributing countries. If the money is forthcoming, *the real question mark being the American Congress*, UNRRA will have spent some $3 billion on relief and rehabilitation for the following countries: China, Poland, Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece, Czechoslovakia, Albania, the Ukraine, and Byelo-Russia. This money may have to cover, in addition, Korea, Formosa, the Philippines, Finland, and perhaps other countries that can qualify: i.e., prove themselves economically destitute. The answer, is of course, that the funds supplied to UNRRA are inadequate. Genuine rehabilitatation is impossible on this sort of dole. Consequently, it will take the world from five to ten years to reach prewar levels of output and standards of living.

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MEANWHILE HUGE SURPLUSES confront America. Surplus Property Administrator Symington estimates that by June, 1946, $32 billion of property will have been declared surplus. This does not include an estimated $9 billion of property expected to be declared surplus in overseas territories. While almost half the total will be commercially unusable combat materiel, such as aircraft, and another 25 per cent in industrial plants of dubious peacetime use, there will still remain an estimated $10 billion of consumer goods and industrial raw materials, machinery and equipment. If but half this amount were given to the countries in desperate need of relief, world recovery could be promoted in less than half the time that it will otherwise take. It is impossible to measure the alleviation of suffering and starvation that such a contribution could accomplish this winter. The American people would undoubtedly be glad to make such a contribution, without any strings attached, if they were informed of the facts. Instead, however, the rest of the world will suffer the most bitter winter in history, while the American Government realizes less than 30 cents on the dollar from its sale of surplus property.

WALTER J. OAKES

THE POLITICS OF BOATING

Life is a game played according to certain written and unwritten rules, and those of us who abide by them fit without friction into a normal civilized group. . . . Constant undisciplined behavior evokes social ostracism, and causes misfits or whatever other polite names there are for people who want to lay down their own rules, or refuse to play.

The English language is the only language which has two beautiful words full of comprehensive meaning describing the desirable people. The words are, of course, "Lady" and "Gentleman." But before one acquires the age to enable one to aspire to these titles, one is a child, and this is the period of life when the seeds for future behaviorism are sown. . . .

We wouldn't be human if we didn't tell parents: "Get a boat for the spratt, and they'll learn to obey the rules, or else." . . . To our pleased amazement, most of our readers seem to agree with us.

—Editorial in "The Rudder: the Magazine for Yachtsmen", for April.

WITH THE MARXICOLOGISTS

A welder quickly learns the dialectic interconnection of cold and heat. He may rest his hand on the cold steel a few inches from his weld. Presently, the burning goes into his hand, and he takes it away. . . . It becomes clear that heating and cooling are polar opposites, inseparably bound to each other. . . . "Motion is the mode of existence of matter," said Engels. Welding is just one spectacular confirmation of this proposition.

—"Modern Welding—a Dialectical Process", article by V. Grey in "Fourth International" for April.

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The Automatization of European People

Editorial Note: I have taken the liberty of giving to the following two letters from France a title perhaps more pretentious than their author would approve. My excuse must be that they seem to me to be the most profound analysis, in intellectual and in moral terms, of the political psychology of postwar Europe which I have yet encountered. Their author, incidentally, is one of those to whom the readers of POLITICS *are sending regular food packages.*

I.

DEAR D. M.:

You can scarcely imagine into what wretchedness (moral and physical) we are sinking; always the level is lower; for if the mass of the goods (or commodities) has increased a bit, the inequality of distribution is constantly more marked. In the sphere of material existence, the distance between prices and salaries (or other doles to the working class) is ever more shocking. In the sphere of cultural "goods," the possibilities of action (or even of participation in some action) are monopolized by the groups that have the support of the "government parties," and nobody can pass muster without pledging his allegiance.

To illustrate the first point: a fairly decent meal in a restaurant runs here to at least 300 francs. In Paris, the prices are even higher. Now most of the workers, and lower-salaried employees (not to speak of the unemployed), live on less than 4,000 francs a month. The question: how do they survive? seems to me idle. When I was in Russia, in 1920-1922, I saw something analogous to the present case: it seems you cannot kill off everybody, not all at once. I have heard, for example, that despite the most ferocious techniques, the American sanitation corps has not succeeded in killing all the mosquitoes in the Arles sector, and I will bet you anything you please that they will never get to the last louse in Montauban. There are countless levels of the liveable, and the thought of survival suggests miraculous expedients; last winter children died "like flies" in France, in Italy, in Greece and elsewhere; but there are a great many left. Beings decaying before one's eyes, accustomed to unwholesome and repugnant "food," who have given up washing themselves except in summer in the rivers; who dwell—if one may use such a word—heaped in hovels, and travel, stacked in ever denser piles, in broken-down conveyances; who can bring to their regular work and social life (in which I include the political demonstrations they attend) nothing more than a mechanical assent; such are the components of the *population.* I underline this word because De Gaulle has recently declared that his regime will not rest on the people, but on the population . . .

As for the second phenomena—the monopoly of ideological activity—this is made possible by the censorship (officially non-existent), by the rationing of paper, the prohibition of periodicals in foreign languages, but in the main by the pressure exerted by massive groups on all dissident minorities. Naturally, there is always a way of triumphing over material obstacles: paper can be got on the black market, presses can easily escape the not-too-diligent surveillance; but this requires means which are possessed by the faithful of the former Vichy regime and are totally lacking to those who persist in being rebellious, and whom the Stalinists denounce as "the Hitlero-Trotzkyite Fifth Column."

But these pecuniary difficulties do not explain the paralysis of spontaneous, daring, passionate initiatives, the absence of that swarming of "clubs" and plans however naive, bizarre, messianic, which characterize a truly revolutionary ferment. It is rather a question of the psychological inertia of the people. What I have in mind is not the famous "passivity" of the masses," who by definition are sheeplike and simplistic, but the strange will to obey, to be subject to a hierarchy and *not have to reflect,* shown by those who would ordinarily be the active nuclei of the nation and form the cadres of the organized parties. What is clamored for is "unity" (of the Resistance, of "anti-fascists," of the Republic); the fusion at no matter what cost of the Socialist and communist parties, of the CGT and the clerical trade unions; the maximum centralization of the State apparatus; and the maximum homogeneity in the nation. (I refer to France with its conglomerate "movements," and to Italy with its six coalition parties; I know nothing at all about how matters stand in this respect in other countries; but among the Spaniards I have detected a like trend). There is an overwhelming desire to jettison difficult problems, intransigent principles, responsibility for one's own consciousness. This is probably not a mere effect of fatigue and under-nourishment, nor of the fascination of totalitarian forms (though these factors have some weight). There is something here which relates to the forces you noted in your remarks on Popular Culture—the habits of automatism, of *zusammenmarschieren,* of responding to slogans that are as imperative as they are trivial, habits which the cinema, the radio, the newspaper headlines, the rationalization of work and pleasure, the tyranny of schedules, have spread and developed to a maximum point. There is an almost complete dislocation of the "norms" in accordance with which one judges his fellows and moves towards or with them: no real relation between "mores" and "morals," beteen immediate, intimate experience and the formulas or schemes (more or less abstract) which purport to express the reality of the world in which we live. For example, compounds like "Nation- country-State," or "technological progress-civilization-humanism," all such "realities" are today a kind of indigestible and quality-less broth, made of *ersatz* and false syntheses, but which must be gulped down and then praised to the skies, if one is to avoid an agonizing and unsustainable hunger, the frightful condition of having to live, spiritually, on nothing, and being, so to speak, left naked in an empty space.

This apathy and disorder—not of the mass, I repeat (the mass of the population want only peace and goods)—but of what was known as the "people" from 1789 to 1914 in

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Europe, and which was called "society" in the France of the 18th century and in the Russia of the whole 19th century—this apathy, I say, has been carefully nurtured by the Stalinist propaganda and the organization of "popular fronts" under the control of the communists. Militant communists have explained to me that such things as "ideologies" and spontaneous uprisings of the oppressed are out of date, and that what is needful now is a big army, well-officered, mobilizable at the first signal (for ends which it would be useless to explain in advance to each soldiers or even to each non-com), and which must be kept ready and above all disciplined, so that no provocation will cause it to budge until commanded to act. The implication is that revolution could be set off, but its potential threat is valuable as a means of pressure and blackmail. For the moment, Moscow's politics requires the complete immobility of these forces, but on this or that day, in such and such a place, trouble may have value, and it will be only necessary to give the word for violence to break out. The men who became recruits out of a sincere desire for revolution must accept the notion that a single mind, not theirs, but thinking for them all, will determine the favorable moment for the great trial, and that it would be foolish and even criminal to become impatient simply because D-Day has been put off indefinitely.

For the moment, it seems that the main concern of those who control this streamlined apparatus is to prevent any attempt at federation by the people of Europe (vetoed alike are the proposals for Scandinavian unity, the most modest attempts at a Balkan or Danubian federation; there was a watchful campaign against the very vague project of a French-Dutch-Belgian Customs Union having ties with Britain.) This implies a methodical stimulation to the various nationalisms in their meanest forms.

In domestic policies (in France and in Italy at least) there is the usual double-talk: 1) appeals for *l'union sacrée* of all "patriots," the only stipulation being that they glorify the USSR, "our powerful ally"; 2) a sterile excitation of the hatred felt for certain "traitors" or profiteers, so as to persuade the public that all would go well if some fifty people were jailed, or if certain others were shot instead of being given five year sentences. In this way all serious critical examination of the real problem is conjured away. The agitation is perpetual, and always short of breath . . .

You are right to be pleased that your circulation is up to 5,000 (which means, I suppose, three times as many readers). Candide would say perhaps, thinking of the two hundred million bipeds who can read English; "it is not very much." But I would reply with Martin: "it is a great deal." You have opened a breach in a Bastille far more formidable and oppressive than the Nazi *Festung Europa,* battered down only at the cost of twenty or thirty million human lives. We cannot expect much in the near future, and I should even say that dazzling successes (of socialism, for example) would frighten me—I would fear a repetition of that cascade of "ultra-democratic" constitutions that we saw showered over Europe in 1919.

What is important is that there be a lighted torch, like yours, around which to rally..

EUROPEAN

July 22, 1945.

II.

DEAR N.:

At the beginning of 1944, S. (who was then doing very dangerous work for the Resistance) came to see me. Among other things, he challenged my views about Russia. Naturally, I was defeated. I was unable to explain clearly how a heroic nationalistic psychosis, accompanied by gigantic holacusts *(Opfer fallen, weder Lamm noch Stier, aber Menschenopfer unerhoert*—"sacrificial victims are being slaughtered—neither lambs nor steers, but humans, fall in numbers untold") had driven into the background any coherent vision of social justice. While on the other hand, it was left for the future historian to evaluate how much real spontaneity went into those offerings.

In the course of a subsequent visit, S. expounded to me the following thesis: in the present world, nothing is possible if a State (and a superlatively strong State at that) does not take the initiative. Impossible to fight the Germans without the parachutists, without the millions of francs sent from London, without the directions given by the Intelligence Service, etc. The resistance wouldn't have had one single submachine-gun if it had not accepted the outside support (i.e. the direction) of certain Governments. On my part, I felt inclined to uphold a utopian view very similar to the one developed by "Gallicus" in POLITICS. I thought that, from the point of view of Europe's future, the aim to have in mind should rather have been that of a true insurrection of the European peoples harassing and undermining the *Herrenvolk* with their own means. I willingly admit (now) the weakness of my argument. I was then haunted by the recollection of the contempt with which, in 1904-1905, in Russia, our revolutionary organizations had rejected all offers of money and weapons from Japanese emissaries whose aim was to quicken the general defeatism of the Russian people in order to win easier victories for the armies of the Mikado. I believe that Pilsudski and a few Finns did not offer such a categorical refusal, and I do remember that there was some wavering in Lenin's circle: *Realpolitik* first . . .). But above all, I did not then give enough consideration to the most crushing objection of all: namely that with the methods employed at Auschwitz and Belsen (of which at that time we had a knowledge which was not only vague, but also weakened by fits of incredulity) Hitler could very well have destroyed the seed of the opposition before it could give any fruit at all. Nevertheless, to reject that hazardous way could not mean anything but to resign oneself to "gaullism," and to the rest. It seemed to me that one should at least be clear about what "gaullism," and the rest, meant. But, of course, since S. was then engaged in perilous action, he psychologically justified in not asking himself too many questions.

Anyway, shortly after the liberation, S.'s position appeared to be that only the Stalinists (with the powerful support of the victorious Red Army) could do anything at all in a revolutionary direction. As for myself, I foresaw (and I think that on this at least I was not entirely wrong) a convergence of militarism and of Stalinist demagogy toward the following double aim: 1) a reinforcement of police control inside every European State; 2) the

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suppression of any tendency toward a "European Federation." And I think that by now S. himself has very little confidence left in the P. C. as "defender of the little people against the trusts."

As for the resistance movement as a whole, in my opinion one must distinguish between the "Maquis" and the "Resistance." I think that to have an idea of the "Maquis," you could recall, without too much risk of being led astray, your own experience in Spain, at the beginning of the Civil War. In fact, in our region, the Spanish guerrilleros have been without any doubt both the backbone of, and the most numerous element in, the insurrection.

But one cannot help feeling embarrassed in dealing with such matters. The bodies—bodies of young martyrs infinitely worthy of our love—are still there, still warm. In their presence, it sounds almost blasphemous to give way to the sadness one feels in seeing once more how youth can indeed be "*a tout asservie*" (exploited for anything). Because, after all, didn't the dictators themselves find myriads of young souls as enthusiastic as these, and (one feels compelled to add) not less pure either? Do not now the official orators of all official commemorations extol the fraternity which united, during the resistance, the young men brought up by the "Action Francaise" with the pupils of the late Komintern? Once he is ready to kneel to the idol Nation, Liberty becomes nothing more than its pale satellite, and, from then on, everything is simple. Must one rejoice or worry over the fact that the French as well as the Italian Resistance movements have adopted unreservedly the kind of pragmatism preached by the late Mussolini: "Let us act first, ideas will come later, by themselves?" This is not an idle metaphysical question, or a pedantic query about the priority of thought. It is rather that one is terror-stricken by such a masssive utilization of the most precious human qualities for ends that are to say the least problematic. The philosophy of the "absurd," so nobly and so subtly understood by men like Albert Camus, is not meant for mass-consumption. Hence, it is by the use of vulgar fetishes that the Mahomets of our time form "armies of believers" which will then rush on to death like bees to the honeycomb. The human bombs of the Japanese appear to be the final, normalised, form of such techniques of government.

After which, one has to mention the very old story that the blood shed in amphitheatres and prisons makes very good cement to fasten the power and the prosperity of simoniac bishops and despots. "We are the "*parti des fusillés.*' Hence, bow very low, ye masses, before Cachin, Marty, Thorez, Duclos, who miraculously survived the deadly battle." There is a miserable competition going on, between parties, and also between nations, each exhibiting its own list of martyrs in order to get a full profit from it.

Resistance to totalitarianism will remain as an imperishable honor to mankind. It was to individuals and groups of very dissimilar origin and nature, and it was carried out with makeshift means, under circumstances which were mostly atrocious. The final result can be even considered providential, but in itself it is certainly not a conquest: men have remained men (or nearly so), they have not become robots, they have not all perished in the crematoriums of Hitlerland. The resistance—with a capital R, and an accompaniment of trumpets, drums, manifestoes, bids for profitable jobs, and plans for new totalitarian arrangements—is a very elastic compound of sincere messianic hopes, demagogical totems and taboos, very noble and very abject ambitions, dreams of liberty, and will-to-power. It is an artificial mythology choking and perverting authentic "epos," which is born in the depths of consciousness and in the real communion of a people.

It seems clear that, after the lamentable comedy of the Etats Generaux of July 14th, the re-establishment of military hierarchy (with the exclusion or the humiliation of the FFI), and the majestic reappearance in the limelight of Messrs. Herriot, Daladier, Reynaud & Co., the chances of a Resistance still embodying something of the true spirit of the resistance of the French people to Hitlerism and Petainism are very slim indeed. The people cannot understand an indefinitely prolonged resistance, in the same way that they cannot understand a "permanent revolution." After all the struggle and the suffering, the people do not ask either for honors or (much less) for the continuation of an exceptional strain. They want a rest, enough to eat, to get married, and to be able to dance and to go to the movies. Of course, if they do not get these things, there will be trouble again. But the exhaustion is such that one can legitimately wonder if, given a moderate amount of normalcy, an authoritarian regime would not be able to organize a triumphant plebiscite in its favor . . .

EUROPEAN

Sept. 3, 1945.

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Acts of Congress of August 24, 1912, and March 3, 1933, of

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Before me, a notary public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Nancy Macdonald, who having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the business manager of the Politics, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher—Politics Publishing Co., 45 Astor Place, New York City 3.

Editor—Dwight Macdonald, 117 East 10th Street, New York City 3.

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NANCY MACDONALD,
Business Manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29th day of September, 1945.

Manuel Lichtenstein

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Terror in the Air

by Gallicus

SOME of the more conscientious liberal apologists for World War II were surprised, and a bit disturbed, when the U. S. Air Force climaxed its attack on Japan's cities with the dropping of two atomic bombs. Of course they wholly approved the use of the bombs, both on grounds of Military Necessity and also on the more elevated level of All-The-Lives-It-Saved. Still, they could not help feeling it odd that so frightful a device should have been used first by our own Democratic and hence, by definition, Humane air forces rather than by *their* Fascist and hence, also by definition, Barbarous air forces. It somehow didn't fit the clear pattern of the rest of the war.

Actually, the pattern's clarity existed only in the minds of the liberals, and the atomic bomb in particular, far from being out of key with the rest of Democratic and/or Humane air strategy, was simply the climax of a quite consistent line of development.

There are two kinds of bombings: Tactical Bombing, carried out by relatively small planes, which is used to support ground troops and is therefore closely synchronized with specific ground operations; and Strategic Bombing (also called "Area Bombing" and "Saturation Bombing"), which uses bigger planes such as the Flying Fortresses, and which is independent of any immediate and specific ground operations, aiming—officially, at least—at a general reduction of the enemy's war-making power. The former is directed mostly at military personnel and military objectives; the latter mostly at factories and cities and the civilians who live and work in them. (The British Air Marshal Harris, the war's leading proponent of Strategic Bombing, spoke of his "de-housing program.") It is hardly necessary to labor the point that, insofar as such a concept can be used in connection with bombing, the former is more humane—or less inhumane—than the latter.

It is interesting to note, therefore, that all through the war the Democratic powers specialized in Strategic Bombing, while the Totalitarianisms, Germany and Russia, stuck pretty closely to Tactical Bombing (until the V Bomb campaign at the end, which was an attempt to reply in kind to the Anglo-American "de-housing program"). The Germans developed the dive-bomber, which is still the only precision type of bombing plane, while the Russians developed the low-flying armored plane, also for co-operation with ground forces. The Red Army fliers, in fact, never engaged in the large scale massacres of civilian cities far behind the lines that the Anglo-American air forces, newspaper readers and radio audiences delighted in. The German horror at Rotterdam, which was crippled with bombs a few minutes after Holland had capitulated, was probably because there had been no time to notify the planes; the raid was part of the Blitz land-conquest of the country. With the capitulation the Germans had every reason to keep intact the great Dutch port on which the RAF shortly began to pile its own horrors.

As to the air blitz on England, the only thing even comparable to Anglo-American air attacks, all Allied military commentators at the time accepted the fact that it was part of the immediate preparations for an expected invasion of England, in the hope of drawing out and destroying the RAF. When the invasion was called off, so was the air Blitz, not because the Luftwaffe, then the world's greatest air fleet, was not in position to continue, but because to the Nazi militarists' way of thinking any damage then ceased to be worth the expenditure of matériel.

The Western militarists' dream, on the other hand, was a vast fleet of heavy bombers which could fly ever higher and farther from the fronts and spread ever greater destruction laterally—a perpetual and ubiquitous Coventry, a one-way battle of high explosives against the bodies of civilians, an attack to which the victims could not even surrender as prisoners. When the war started, Britain was the only democracy equipped with any kind of fleet of bombers, about 500 of them, not built for tactical bombing because the democracies could not conceive of tactical bombing until the Germans developed it. Then the United States began pouring heavy bombers out of its factories. At first it was explained that these were the only kind practical to produce here, because they could be flown to their destination; as transportation developed and British factories at the same time swung into full production nearer the scene, the pretense was dropped and the bombers continued to become heavier and higher-flyinng.

The Cost (1): Soldiers' Lives

The sacrifices made to produce this nightmare were formidable, including the lives of ground soldiers who were left without enough tactical aircraft for adequate support. In Italy, with virtual control of the air, the American and Royal air forces were able to do no more than prevent tactical air support for the German troops; they did not have the planes to support their own, especially in accidented terrain. The campaign dragged out for 19 months, with a huge toll of lives on both sides. Correspondents reported soldiers praying for help from the noisy monsters above, and when the prayers were answered it was likely to be with bombs on their own heads. The only all-out tactical air effort of the long battle of Italy as the onslaught on Cassino, an utter failure with the heavy bombers available. To cap it, they spread death among the nearby and not so nearby attacking troops and blew up several Allied batteries. They were much better at bombing the socialistic working class quarters of Milan.

Even in Normandy, the Allied tactical air arm was so underdeveloped that heavy bombers had to be extensively

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relied on for support of the invasion. A dispatch from Harold Denny in the *N. Y. Times* of July 26, 1944, gives an idea: "The aerial bombardment with which today's offensive was launched was the most concentrated air support ever given to American ground forces. As one watched those 3,000 airplanes—*half of them four-engined craft*—(my italics—G.) march wave on wave across the sky for two and a half hours, heard the roar of their exploding bombs and felt the earth shake for miles, it seemed impossible that any human being could live through it . . . After such a stupendous demonstration, it was almost a shock to learn on going up to the infantry that our troops were meeting with stiff resistance and beating ahead slowly. By mid-afternoon, they had advanced only 1½ miles . . ." Also, as in Italy, the heavy bombers proved almost as dangerous to friend as to foe, as was dramatized by the death of 4-star General McNair by an American bomb.

Nevertheless, so hipped were the Allied high command on Strategic Bombing, that it was not until there were too many heavy bombers for the airfields (they need big ones) to hold that a real tactical air force was developed. The U. S. Ninth (Tactical) Air Force was not even set up in England—let alone developed to any strength—until August, 1943.

The Cost (2): "Murder, Inc."

The fiction of American high-level "precision bombing" of cities was kept up for a long time, although any war correspondent knew that our heavy bombers could not even avoid hitting their own troops, let alone get the "pinpoint" effects our propaganda claimed. A legend was woven around the Norden bombsight (which, incidentally, America refused to lend-lease to England). Even if the Norden bombsight were infallible in combat conditions—which it is far from being—it could not confine the hits to the target. This is because the bombs are dropped from fast-moving planes in clips of five to eight at a time, landing in a long row known as a "bomb run." A bombsight can check the lateral deviation of the run, but the hits are still widely spaced. And, more important, the planes swoop in over important targets from every direction, so that the runs radiate out like a sunburst over a large area.

A committee of artists, after investigating the ruin spread among Italian churches and art objects by Allied bombers, urged the air chiefs to consider the location of such treasures in laying down bomb runs over cities. As a result, some regard was shown for major cathedrals, which have generally been at least (and often at most) left standing.* Neither the committee nor the air chiefs seem to have worried about the fact that so many chosen objectives were in the middle of inartistic but crowded workingclass dwellings.

Whenever the Army could get a reconnaisance photo showing only a factory destroyed, it was widely reproduced in the press. But we now have much direct evidence as to the imprecision of precision bombing, from the bombed cities of occupied Europe.

**The Universe*, an English Catholic newspaper, reported on May 25 that between 9 and 10 thousand of the 12 thousand Catholic churches in Germany—many of them priceless art objects—were destroyed or "badly damaged" by Allied air attacks.

Finally, the fiction was dropped and "area bombing" began to be publicly spoken of. The Allied public had been "softened up" by propaganda, until it could "take" the gruesome reality. The romantic air adventure stories in the headlines began to be replaced by sadistic revelry in blood and vengeance. One American bomber crew even named their plane "Murder, Inc." and it figured prominently in American newspaper stories until one December day in 1943 it was shot down and the Nazis took front and back pictures of a live American crewman with the words "Murder, Inc." painted in Old English characters on his leather jacket like a baseball team name—pictures almost every Allied sympathizer in Europe thought were Nazi fakes. It is not a pretty thought that the word "Hun" in this war was reserved for use by the Nazis, who applied it to the American air force which they called "the Huns of the Air."

There was more and more concentration on arson bombs and an ingenious new incendiary gelatin was developed which spatters and clings adhesively to everything far and wide and can burn a hole through a man. Meanwhile Block-busters came and in the last months "earthquake" bombs; at the very end "volcano" bombs. It was the brass hats' dream. Terror from the air was let loose from one end of Germany to the other, terror that blasted and burned to death not the able-bodied men, who were all at the Front, but the slave laborers, the women, children, sick and aged of German cities. It rose to a final crescendo, closing with 18 successive days of bombing, all but two of them through the clouds.

The Military Results: Very Small

As German territory was occupied by the Allied armies, news stories began to come back about the "surprisingly" large percentage of German war industry still left intact despite years of much-publicized Strategic Bombing. (Surprising, that is, to those who had believed the Allied propaganda about "knocking Germany out of the war from the air.")

On May 18 Raymond Daniell cabled the *N. Y. Times*: "As our occupation forces uncover more and more hidden factories, it becomes apparent that one thing that was wrong with the calculations of Marshal Harris and others who believed that Germany could be knocked out by air attacks on 60 key cities, was that they underestimated German industry's ability to go underground. The farther one gets from the known industrial centers, the more numerous become hidden factories. At Igling, a tiny farming community near here, I visited a fabulous hidden industrial city in a forest of tall cedars. It was only one of half a dozen similar installations within a radius of 30 miles."

A *Time* correspondent reported a month later: "The great cities of Germany are dead . . . Yet air power did not do what many an American thinks it did . . . Allied experts are gradually realizing that 70% of German industry, perhaps more, escaped the bombs." He notes that Krupp still retained 60% of its capacity intact, and quotes a significant sentence from an Army report about a huge steel plant at Wetzlar: "Despite tremendous bomb damage around the plant, it has not been injured except by foreign work-

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ers." (See "Hitler: the Liberals' Indispensable Man"; POLITICS, January, 1945.)

Any last doubts on the subject were dispelled by the report of the Senate committee headed by Senator Kilgore, which, after an extensive investigation of Germany's surviving war industry, stated on July 9 that:

(1) The total German productive capacity affected by bombing was about 20%.

(2) At the end of the war, Germany was producing 10,000 tons of synthetic rubber a year, and had over 4 million tons of machine tools intact, plus a vast undamaged capacity for producing more.

(3) Her steel industry could be put back into operation "with only minor repairs."

(4) Her dye and chemical industries—including explosives—was largely untouched.

(5) In another six months, the entire oil refining and storage system would have been underground.

The Human Results: Very Large

The Nazis' reply, finally to the Allied terror from the air was the V-Bomb attack on England, which provoked cries of "Nazi barbarism" in the Allied press until . . . the atomic bomb exploded over Hiroshima. The V-Bomb was a barbaric weapon, but it was no more indiscriminate in its slaughter of unarmed civilians than the Allied heavy-bomber raids. The only people on our side who had a moral right to be shocked at V-bombs were the few, mostly clergymen, who had also protested against the Allied air tactics. In any case, the V-bomb was the exception that proved the rule: namely, the difference between totalitarian and democratic air strategy. It is true that it made no difference to the people of Rotterdam in May, 1940, and the people of London at the end of that year that they were being bombed for immediate military reasons. But even that makes a difference to those who want to understand the war, and it makes a big difference in the brutalization of the public and airmen whose air fleets are doing the bombing. And above all it makes a monstrous difference in scale involving how many cities and how big an area beyond the prospective battle fields will be touched and for how long it will endure—whether for instance, bombed out families have places to move or don't ,whether bombed children will be terrorized two or three times only, or so frequently as to become neurotic for life. For it is true that quantity does change into quality, and that all such differences in scale must make other and deeper differences to the people involved.

The Allied Technique: Police Terror

We are now faced with the question: Why this difference? Why did the military chiefs of the democracies, and not those of the totalitarianisms, choose to make such a sacrifice, for the sake of aerial terror, of materiel, of productive capacity which could have poured out a mass of tactical craft and weapons enough to bring victory a year nearer, of manpower lost in their inadequately protected ground forces, of military strategy?

The first thing to be established is the significance of air bombings of civilians. The first real air bombing of civilians—outside of some isolated petards dropped from fighter planes in World War I—occurred I believe in 1923 when the Sheikh of Yemen refused oil concessions to the British. The Royal Flying Corps retaliated by bombing villages. Civilian bombing was used again by the British in Northern India, by the French against the rebellious Rif population and, under the Colonial ministry of bloody Paul Reynaud, against the women and children of villages in Indo-China when the men of the villages had marched out in a rebellion. It was used, though to a lesser degree as against military bombing, by the Italians in Abyssinia and the Japanese in China, particularly in the later stages of the war. Finally it was used in the Spanish civil war at Guadarrama, by German planes against the revolutionary Asturian miners.

One thing stands out in all this. *In all these instances air bombings of civilians was used against colonial peoples or revolutionists.* There were other conflicts such as the Chaco War which did not fall under this heading and in which bombing of civilians played no role. *The social significance of bombing civilians is that it is basically the weapon for police terror against populations.*

The air arm is the counter-revolutionary arm par excellence. It is manned by highly paid volunteers who quickly form a special caste. They need come in no contact with the victims of the attacks and cannot fall under their influence. They can be brought from a distance, from some unaffected area. They even need not come in contact with the rank and file of their own land forces, having at least non-commissioned officer rank and living a life of their own in specially set aside localities. We can see why the two countries with the greatest capitalist contentrations of wealth to protect, with the most powerful trade empires, should have decided to use this war—"use" is the word—to build anti-civilian air fleets at any cost. We can see why they wanted these fleets as detached as possible in their operations from those of the land forces. We can see why it appealed so much to the military mind, the anti-revolutionary mind of army chiefs who rule millions of men and take lives with dictatorial power, to establish firmly a tradition of making it permissible to level city after city completely without restraint in screaming terror and of making an amusing joke of their murder, incorporated. It is now perfectly well accepted, by civilized-looking people you can have tea with in drawing rooms, that this is to start in right now being the sword over the head of the conquered populations.

But we cannot dismiss the whole democratic air war as simply an excuse to prepare for something. Its all-out character bespoke of the real thing, that this was already that "something else." This brings us to the essential nature of the European war.

The Counter-Revolutionary War

To the totalitarian powers, although they were the original have-nots, this was in no way a revolutionary war but a war of conquest. But to the great American and British masters of world trade, Germany's war was a revolutionary one as far as they were concerned. They cer-

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tainly were not concerned about an invasion of Poland, over which they did not (thank God) go to war with Russia either in 1939 or now. They were perfectly willing to stay at peace with Italy, after Abyssinia and the Spanish civil war, as long as Italy remained at peace with them. They tolerated and traded with Fascism for years in Italy and Germany. But this war was different, because this was a threat to all existing business relations, to their commercial and economic stranglehold on the world, because the Nazis weren't sticking to the rules of the game, because the whole apple-cart was threatened, because "you can't do business with Hitler." From a world imperialist view German imperialist expansion was in every sense a genuine revolution, besides threatening to bring a social one after it because of the suicidal desperation of the Reich's ruling groups.

The two great "haves" proceeded to treat it as such. They acted toward it exactly as they will act toward any colonial country which has a revolution and toward any country at all which has a social revolution. They turned to their weapon of police terror—air power. They gave their acts a peculiar type of ruthlessnesss more characteristic of represssion than of military hostilities. *The war waged by the Anglo-Saxon powers was essentially a counter-revolutionary war.*

The outstanding feature of the democratic air war was quite simply: terrorism. If we assume that terror was its chief aim, we can account for the concentration on civilian-packed *cities,* although—as the Allied intelligence must have known—the most vital war plants were being moved underground in remote rural districts. We can account for the massive raids in mid-February, 1945, on hitherto untouched Dresden, which the Allies chose to demolish at the moment when it was packed with a million refugees fleeing before the Russsian advance—bewildered and panicky families camping out in the streets without protection from the death in the skies. We can even explain the minor riddle (see the testimony of two Allied railway experts in the May 25 papers) why the Allies concentrated their bombs on city yards, where "hundreds of workers were immediately available" for repairs, instead of on bridges, viaducts, and main-line tracks but in the country, where repairs would have taken much longer.

A characteristic feature of counter-rebellious repression is that no quarter is given under any circumstances. In prison revolts, for example, the guards will let prisoners murder hostages from their number rather than come to terms, and will even mow their own comrades down if the rebels use them as shields. Thus the democratic air chiefs bombed occupied Europe without compunction, to such a degree that the DeGaulle government-in-exile several times made strong representations. Thus, too, the 1943 Easter Sunday air massacre of the friendly (and highly religious) population of Belgrade, who, thronging the streets on the way to church, were suddenly subjected to the worst air raid in Balkan history up to then. This raid, incidentally, created a furor throughout the Balkans, and was a factor in the swing of public sympathies from America over to Russia. It was a characteristic bit of Rooseveltian brutality like the "Unconditional Surrender" slogan, which can also be best explained as part of a pattern of counter-revolutionary repression.

War Aim No. 1: To Keep It Going

Earlier in this article I have talked of certain "sacrifices," certain "inefficiencies" which the Allied high command was willing to submit to for the sake of following out its Strategic Bombing ("Non-Military Bombing" would be more descriptive) policy: notably, a greater expenditure of money and materiel and a less effective military prosecution of the war than would have been the case with Tactical Bombing. I have just described the political aim—the effective waging of a counter-revolutionary war—which justified these "sacrifices." However, it is possible to see these "sacrifices" as not simply means to another end, but as ends in themselves. The simple question we must finally ask is: was a cheap and a short war wanted? This takes us into from politics into economics.

For Germany and Japan, the answer unquestionably was: Yes. Their economic situation demanded it, and the surprise and masssive knock-out techniques they used, from the German blitzkreig of 1940 to Pearl Harbor, were designed to make the war as short and economical as possible. Hence their preference for Tactical as against Strategic Bombing.

The two democratic powers, however, had a very different conception of the war. They wanted it to be costly, long, and destructive. Their air policy was well adapted to this end in two respects:

(1) The effect of Strategic Bombing was to smash the *peacetime* economy of Germany—and to a large extent of Europe—since it was unselective and directed at cities and industrial areas. Naturally, it was the militarily essential installations which were repaired by the Germans, the homes and non-essential plants being left in ruins (so that one might almost say that the democracies' air war amounted, in the long run, to a war on everything *but* military objectives!) This long-range destruction of the European productive plant is now openly acknowledged by our statesmen as a war aim in the case of Germany. And whether admitted or not as a deliberate aim in Europe generally, it has certainly taken place, with effects which are not, let us say, wholly to the competitive disadvantage of American business firms. Not only has competition been eliminated, but also potential postwar markets for American goods have been created (cf. the "March of Time" newsreel on reconversion a year ago which complacently presented shots of ruined European cities as one of the great postwar American business "opportunities.") Russia and Germany, on the other hand, having essentially non-capitalist economic systems, looked on other nations' productive capacities as loot to be exploited rather than as competition to be destroyed; and their air policy was shaped accordingly.

(2) The emphasis on Strategic Bombing made the war more profitable for the plane makers than it might have been, since heavy bombers are very expensive, culminating in the fabulous million-dollar B-29. It is also interesting to note that, although it is known that the destructive power of a bomb does not increase in proportion to its weight, so that two one-ton bombs do more damage than one two-ton bomb, the weight of bomb used has steadily increased with the lifting power of planes. But the direct munitions makers, the "merchants of death," are not so important in World War II as they were in World War I. In a total

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war, the whole capitalist class are "merchants of death," and thus actively interested in prolonging the war. It is hard to explain certain omissions in the Strategic Bombing program on any other basis. Why, otherwise, were the Gnome-Rhone aircraft works, Franco's largest, left unscathed to continue pouring out planes for Hitler? Why did the Allied armies entering the bomb-leveled Ruhr-Rhineland industrial area find the huge Zeiss optical works, an essential cog in Hitler's war machine, almost intact? Why were the Krupp steel works and the vast I. G. Farbenindutrie chemical plants allowed to function with comparatively little attention from Allied bombers all through the war, to be laid waste in a few big raids at the very end?

And finally, there is the Skoda episode, one of the war's greatest—and least publicized—scandals.

The Skoda Scandal

For almost the whole duration of the war, nearly six years, the vast Skoda munitions works at Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, turned out guns, tanks, ammunition and airplane engines for Hitler's armies. Two purely token raids were made on it, that was all. An American army investigating committee has stated that they did no damage. Skoda's 126 great factories around Pilsen operated full blast, until, in the last months, they began to feel the pinch of raw materials shortage. Gradually production slowed, almost to a halt. Meanwhile, American forces neared Pilsen, already assigned long ago to the American zone of operations. Skoda, intact, lay waiting. Its 35,000 Czech skilled munition workers were waiting too, for their revenge for six years of Gestapo oppression: the production of arms against Japan. There is little anywhere in the world to equal Skoda. And then—

On April 25, eleven days before Skoda fell into American hands, eleven days before the general surrender, April 25 when the war was practically over, Berlin was falling, the Wehrmacht had collapsed, the American armies were waiting on the Elbe—on April 25 Skoda, which had practically stopped producing because of lack of supplies, was bombed to pieces by American heavy bombers.

The bombing was so complete that an American army commission later said it had reduced production capacity by a minimum of 70%, and that it would take at least a year to make it even approach normal. Skoda was a mass of twisted wreckage—with 200 of its specialized workers, incidentally, killed or maimed in the raid.

In plain words, as long as Skoda turned out implements of death which had to be met by placing juicy contracts with Allied producers of death, it was let alone by the great American air force under its great Commander-in-Chief. But the moment it became apparent that Skoda would be used for the Allied side, lessen the production load here and draw contracts which would could into those of Allied capitalists, Skoda had to go. Even the work of rebuilding it now will mean more juicy contracts . . .

OUT ON A LIMB?

The departmental committee appointed by the Minister of Pensions to consider the design, development and use of artificial limbs has issued its report. The present position is that, as a result of concentration and amalgamations, Government orders for arms must be placed with a single firm, Messrs Ideal Limbs, Ltd. There is also only one firm, Messrs Hanger, in a position to accept a large Government contract for legs. — The Economist, July 28.

Individual Responsibility

Some Recent C. O. Actions

Note: For obvious reasons, the Conscientious Objector is especially concerned with the problem of how the individual can act decently in a world whose indecency is coming to exceed all bounds. I have put together below some accounts of CO efforts, by action and by thought, to meet this problem; all the information has come in within the past month. —DM

(1)

When the U. S. entered the war, Bent Andresen was manager of a co-operative store in Medford, Mass. In his early thirties, he was (and is) a member of the Socialist Party, had worked in the chemical industry, and had been a trade union organizer. He became a C. O. and went into a C. P. S. camp. After the atomic bombings, he "walked out" of the Minersville, Calif., CPS camp, and began to hitch-hike Eastward, distributing as he went some 4,000 copies of "A Message to People of Goodwill" which he composed and mimeographed himself. Excerpts:

"Nearly half a million human beings were obliterated recently in a mere matter of seconds — men, women and children; the aged, the sick and the newborn . . . the war criminal and the innocent. . . By any standard of values, the good was pulverized with the evil.

"I am not calling on you at this time to question the original need for fighting this war — although I must and do question it. But I am pleading with you to question the need for this most hideous of all atrocities. Not only to question the need, but to consider the result — to *ourselves* most of all. Can we fail to protest without suffering a permanent injury to our national and our individual character? . . .

"Now is the time for the people of America to cry out that the first atomic bombs in history *shall be the last! That war be waged no more!* Anything less real is moral and physical suicide.

Most sincerely,
BENT ANDRESEN
(Conscientious Objector)

In Rochester, N. Y., he was arrested and returned to California for trial on charges of deserting CPS. The atrocious conditions in the Sacramento, Calif., county jail were the last straw; he took a step he had long been contemplating: he began a total hunger strike, refusing food and water. A letter written to his wife on October 22 gives some idea of what this means: "I am now 8½ days along in my fast . . . The past four days I have brushed my teeth to remove the film but have endeavored to retain no part of the toothbrush moisture in my mouth. Today I tried a wee speck of raw white onion in the hope it would remove the foul and bitter taste from my mouth. I wish I knew what I weigh now . . . Today I got a mattress — if you can call some straw in a denim bag a mattress — when some men were released on parole . . . We are in the heart of California's fruit and vegetable area, yet there is none of either—not a tomato or an orange. It is incred-

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ible. Yet I doubt if the sheriff considers himself a hard man or unreasonable. 'You just don't treat prisoners as if they were human beings.' "

After almost two weeks of total fast, Andresen collapsed and was removed to the County Hospital, where he is being forcibly fed. "I am determined not to voluntarily partake of any food until I am free," he wrote at the beginning of his strike. His protest is against conscription itself: he denies the right of the government which climaxed with the atomic bomb the horror of *its* war, to dispose of *his* activities. Like Corbett Bishop, Stanley Murphy and a few other courageous and heroic CO's, Andresen is an "absolutist," refusing all co-operation with a State he considers (rightly, in my opinion) to be evil. Not all of us who agree with him and sympathize with his action feel it is best at this moment to follow his example — or perhaps we lack the courage and devotion. But it is impossible for me not to be proud and glad that such Americans exist.

(2)

On October 15, eight prisoners in Federal prisons at Lewisburg, Pa., and Ashland, Ky., began their eighteenth week of solitary confinement for refusing to eat in racially segregated dining halls. Most of them are CO's, seven are white, one colored. The action began early in June at the Ashland, Ky., prison, when fourteen prisoners refused to eat in the Jimcrow dining hall and requested a place where "men of all races who were so disposed could eat together." Their names were:

William Bode
Phillip Brooks
Bjorn Eikram
William Fogarty
Charles Hall
William Hefner
Jason Hopkins
Morris Horowitz
John Neubrand
Rodney Owen
Alfred Partridge
Bayard Rustin
Arnold Satterthwait
George Yamada

Since then, some have been transferred to other prisons, and the authorities have refused to state whether they are still in solitary or not. But eight of them are definitely known still to be in solitary confinement. Having myself spent just 2 hours alone in a jail cell, I have some faint idea of what 18 weeks of it must be like. These men's convictions about racial democracy must be deeprooted indeed.

Further information may be had from: Sander Katz, 140 Riverside Drive, New York 24, N. Y.

(3)

October 9.

SIR:

Among the emerging flavors of POLITICS, one of the most important to some of your readers is the attention given to individual responsibility . . . I read from your pages the lesson that we should not let ignorance, inertia, or considerations of short-term personal advantage prevent our making decisions about our own actions, in the light of their effects . . .

Soon, we trust, CO's will be returning to their home communities. These men constitute a pretty well-sifted group with concern for the effects of their lives. They seek guidance on ways in which they can make their peacetime lives contribute to continued peace. We have prepared a series of mimeographed articles, by individuals in various fields, aimed at making individuals feel personally responsible for the social effect of their vocations, and showing them how these vocations may be made to contribute to the welfare of the community — local and world . . .

WILLIAM E. STAFFORD.

BRETHREN SERVICE COMMITTEE,
22 SOUTH STATE ST., ELGIN, ILL.

Note by DM: I have read the articles prepared to date — on history-teaching, sociology, architectural drafting, art and letters, missions, and social recreation —and should think they would be, for the most part, of great value to people in these fields. The ones on history, by Theodore Paullin, and on art, by William Everson, seem especially good. All may be obtained by writing to Stafford at the above address.

(4)

SIR:

One of the benefits to CO's from their enforced wartime removal to CPS camps and prisons has been the opportunity to examine some of society's institutions without the fogginess of personal involvement. It has become clear to many men that the war economy and the pre-war economy are all of a piece — that war begins with the profit motive and pressure advertising of capitalist business, the falsehood and half-truth of most public education and entertainment; that peace could come only with the discovery of new patterns of society to replace the personality-exploitation of the existing ones.

There are already some experiments going forward in the search for such new patterns that are well-known around CPS—the Macedonia co-operative community, organized by Morris Mitchell among poor white farmers in North Georgia; the Pacific Ackworth School, created by a group of pacifists in Southern California in order to educate their own children and others with some freedom from the stereotypes of public school systems; various small arts-crafts-publishing groups. And there are such clearing-houses as the Co-operative League in Chicago, Community Service in Yellow Springs, Ohio, the Rural Co-operative Community Council at Teaberryport, New York, which help to spread information about certain kinds of community enterprises.

There are probably, however, readers of POLITICS engaged in some work of this sort who do not come within the orbit of these agencies. If there are, and if they would be interested in adding to their number CO's or other individuals who share their ideas, they might be able to help their cause greatly by sending information about themselves and their groups to POLITICS, which would be very useful indeed as a channel of communication between such groups and individuals.

TOM POLK MILLER.

C. P. S. CAMP 56
WALDPORT, ORE.

(5)

Postcard from a North Dakota Jail:

DEAR DWIGHT:

Judge gave 4 of us 18 months apiece for walking out of CPS; said he was taking into consideration the length of time we'd been in — hence the short sentence. Said he recognized us as high-principled and honest, "but I am appalled to think what might have happened to the world if any sizable group in this country had felt as you do." I've

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sent him a copy of "Responsibility of Peoples." In the jail are ordinary men & friendly. (What a stupid waste this place represents.) One said, when he heard our charge — "Dang, when they can't find anything else to pick you up for, they get you for being peaceable!" 3 Mexican kids — 15, 18, 19 — in the US without passports; 2 Indians who beat up a Nisei while all drunk in city jail; 2 drunk & disorderlies; one robbery. All with no illusions about the war, community responsibility & authority. Unpretentious, ordinary people — good guys.

OCTOBER 24. ARTHUR WISER

THE MILITARY MIND (Cont'd.)

Ask General of the Army Douglas MacArthur about the future of war and his eyes light up as they involuntarily look toward the sky.

"In the air, in the air," he murmurs softly. "The future is there. Not as we see it today—far greater, far bigger than that; almost beyond imagination. A war of logistics and movement and swift long-range thrusts—all in the air."

—International News Service dispatch of July 10, as quoted in "Pacifica Views" for Aug. 24.

WITH THE HEAVY THINKERS: What's-Wrong-With-Europe Department

One of the more unexpected pleasures of coming home after thirteen months overseas was to turn on the radio and hear every ten or fifteen minutes . . . an exciting little dialogue about how "Cheerios taste so good for breakfast!" Those who are suffering from an overdose of radio commercials may think this strange, but the radio commercial, like other forms of advertising, fills a very large part of American life. In Italy, Austria, Yugoslavia, Greece, France . . . this is one of the things I became homesick for. . . .

Italy lacks a lot of things; briefly, Italy lacks wealth and democracy. The lack of advertising may play an important part in those two great over-all lacks. . . . It is not only radio advertising that the Italians lack. They have practically no highway billboards . . . and relatively few and small advertisements in newspapers. . . . Even with the paper shortage, this leaves the Italians with a lot of empty white space, especially on their walls. They fill it up with political slogans, mostly meaningles: "Hurray for the King!' 'Down with the King!" "The Liberals are Reactionary!" "We want more sugar!"

This is one of the things mass advertising does in America: it keeps peoples minds on their cigarettes and breakfast foods . . . It makes for a more stable government—one of the attributes of a working democracy. And it makes for bigger cigarettes and breakfast-food sales—which means more wealth. . . . The average American could name offhand dozens of nationally advertised products he never uses, but would have difficulty naming as many political leaders. Any visitor to Rome learns all the important political names in a day or so because they shout at him from every wall, but I still don't know the name of a single brand of Italian cigarettes or razor blades. Paris, of course, is much better; but it doesn't approach New York.

There is a fundamental difference between advertising and political propaganda. The advertiser tells you that life is wonderful and you can have love, wealth, and all your heart's desires by using his brand of soap; he tries to make you generally content with your lot, but ambitious for something a little better than you've got. The political propagandist (Mediterranean variety) tells you, on the other hand, that life is rotten, that you are being swindled by the rascals in power, and you can only avoid starvation and chaos by throwing them out. He tries to make you generally discontented, but instead of installing the worthy ambition to improve your lot by buying something you can't afford, he invites you to sit back and let him bring heaven on a silver platter. No incentive at all for you to drive ahead!

Thus advertising, by running the customer into debt, forces him to work harder to pay it off, thereby producing more wealth for himself and his country. But the Mediteranean politician, by making the voter discontented with his lot, gives him an excuse to knock off work for the afternoon and yell his head off at a political rally, making himself and his country that much poorer and promoting political turbulence.

Another factor is the position of women. Women in the Mediterranean countries are not so emancipated as in America. . . . It should not be too difficult for a nation-wide advertising campaign to make Italian women want lipsticks and silk stockings, and once the germ of the idea is planted, it could subtly grow into a real economic and social revolution.

—"Italians Need to be Told," by John Chabot Smith, head of the Rome Bureau of the "N. Y. Herald-Tribune"; in "Printer's Ink' for Sept. 21.

Books

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FRONTIERS OF SOCIETY. **By Abram Kardiner, with the collaboration of Ralph Linton, Cora DuBois, and James West. Columbia University Press. $5.**

This work is the second report from one of the most important research programs now going on in the social sciences—Dr. Abram Kardiner's seminar at Columbia University, where the principles of psycho-dynamic analysis (derived from psychoanalysis) are being brought to bear on data from many cultures reported on by social anthropologists.

The research grew out of a number of problems arising after many primitive societies had been subjected to scientific study and description. First, anthropologists noted tremendous differences in institutions and behavior from one culture to the next, which seemed to explode almost every generality about "human nature." Was "human nature" to be considered infinitely malleable? Secondly, within each culture, a similar tone often appeared to pervade all its institutions, art, thought and even dreams. What was its cause? Third, anthropologists were non-plussed by the problem of social stability and change. How were the values of the group so uniformly transmitted to all its members? Why did societies change at all when (except for those under the impact of another civilization) there seemed to exist a uniformity of unquestioning acceptance? Why did some societies fall apart under the pressure of outside influences and others successfully absorb and integrate them?

Fourth—this is a corollary of the first three—how was it possible to compare and make value judgments between one culture and another when each seemed to have completely different assumptions and rationale, and all—as far as could be seen—appeared to handle successfully the problems of social survival. Since it was no longer possible to compare similar institutions isolated from culture—marriage or religion meant completely different things in different cultural contexts—and since each culture as a whole seemed to have a completely different basis, how could one make cross-cultural comparisons?

Dr. Kardiner's seminar has made major contributions to all these problems. In his earlier volume, *The Individual and his Society*, he has told us how the key concept of "basic personality" was derived from the empirical study of a number of simple societies. Noting that the institutions (i.e., the modal practices) regulating the socialization of the child paralleled in a surprising way religious conceptions in each group, Kardiner hypothesized the formation of a "basic personality" by the common experiences of growth that every member of a society had undergone; and that this common personality "projected" itself into the folktales, myths, religions and characteristic dreams of the group.

Most important is Kardiner's hypothesis that the basic personality is formed by the kind of parental care the infant and child receives—the manner of feeding, quality of affection, the way in which disciplines are instituted and so forth. Kardiner calls these "primary" institutions. "Secondary" institutions (religion, etc.) reflect the primary in a striking way thus, the powerful and aggressive wife and mother of the polyandrous Marquesans is reflected in the

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predatory woman of Marquesan myths; the stern patriarch of the Tanala family, who offers security in exchange for obedience, in the Tanala god.

But the projective systems are more than a mere *reflection* of primary institutions; they are a major pillar of social stability since they relieve specific tensions created in the individual by the social growth pattern. The complexity of projective systems is an indicator of the extent of tensions in the individual. Among the Comanche, where the child's growth is free and uninhibited, the projective systems are very simple. In our own culture, where sexual restrictions coupled with the universal need to validate oneself by being "successful" lead to a general anxiety over one's adequacy, projective systems (of which social ideologies are now becoming the most important, replacing religion) assume great complexity.

For the analysis of the projective system as a tension reliever, the essential and indispensable tool—according to Dr. Kardiner—is psychodynamics—the science dealing with the processes human beings use to integrate their experiences and form satisfying patterns of response. Kardiner asserts that while these psychological processes were discovered in clinical practice in our own society, they are universal.

The present volume makes two major contributions: (1) in technique, and (2) in applying the concept of basic personality to Western culture.

As for technique: the basic personality need no longer be hypothesized from the growth pattern and the projective system of a group. In the monumental study of Alor (an island in the East Indies), basic personality is derived directly from the biographies of a number of representative individuals, as well as by the Rorshach test (verbal responses to a standard set of abstract designs). In one of the triumphs of modern social science, all three techniques —the analysis of the growth pattern and the projective system, the analysis of the biographies, and the results of the Rorschach test—gave the same result as the Alorese basic personality, with minor differences of emphasis.

In the application of the concept of basic personality to our own Western culture, a number of problems are immediately evident. First, in view of its long history and present heterogeneity (the existence of social classes, the sub-cultures of different ethnic groups and nations, rural and urban life, etc.), is it possible to speak of a single "basic personality" in our culture? Kardiner believes it is. The basic personality revealed in the Bible and the Greek drama is not different from our own, he asserts; the fundamental family constellation has remained the same, and is still common to all the sub-cultures of our society.

But an undifferentiated basic personality is not able to throw light on social processes in our culture; Kardiner introduces the notion of "character types"—variants of basic personality caused by differences in growth patterns between one family and another. Kardiner, while he emphasizes the tremendous importance of different character types in our culture, refuses to correlate them with any social factors—any character type apparently can occur with the same frequency in any social group. But are not such factors as sexual mores, the presence or absence of nurses and governesses, the affective relations between parents and child, the ability of parents to protect and gratify the wishes of the child, crucial in the development of character? If these factors are related to class—and it cannot be denied that to a great extent they are—how can Kardiner assert that there is no relation between character and class? It seems to me that the analysis of Western culture will require the use of class, national and perhaps other character types.

A second difficulty in applying the concept of basic personality to Western society is the peculiar character of our projective systems. Their role is considerably diminished by a very important empirical and scientific system, which gives a picture of the world unrelated to primary institutions and basic personality. Western society, in other words, does not live within a view of the real world that is for the most part derived from childhood experiences; it has discovered a technique for creating cosmic systems completely unrelated to its own personality, systems which have a general and universal validity. Kardiner perhaps overestimates the present importance of science; most people are still effectively under the control of systems of a projective nature which are unaffected by any type of scientific demonstration. Yet the potentialities of science are enormous. For the first time man can become the subject rather than the object of history. The phrase is as apt for Kardiner's view of society as for Marx's.

It has not been possible here to do more than indicate the nature of these new advances in the understanding of man and society. Perhaps most gratifying is the fact that they supplement and refine rather than replace previous advances—notably that of Marx and his followers. Whereas Marx made a direct leap from economy to superstructure, Kardiner interposes a growth pattern ("related to the main problems of adaptation, such as subsistence economy") and a basic personality. As a result it seems likely that a more exact and sensitive instrument of historical and social understanding has been created.

NATHAN GLAZER.

THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES. **By Herbert Hewitt Stroup. Columbia University Press. $2.50.**

Herbert H. Stroup, a sociology instructor at Brooklyn College, has endeavored to examine and explain the operation of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and to note—although this only incidentally, unfortunately—the traits of the followers and leaders and the changing relationship between the two. He read the literature produced by the leaders and "spent considerable time in friendly association with some of the Witnesses. This involved 'canvassing' with them . . . eating at their tables, even visiting them in jail."

The result has been an accumulation of facts—usually petty as well as unintegrated—and critical comments which are more the products of the writer's personality than results of moral or intellectual flaws in the Jehovah's Witnesses. In a pedantic, aimless way, reasons are offered explaining why people join the Jehovah's Witnesses organization. The causes come forth pell-mell—you accept them all or you can take the ones that please you.

Stroup is so active listing all the facts he can think of that he overlooks the need to emphasize the more important ones, to state logical generalizations, and to explain what the Witness *is*, what differentiates the group from other fundamentalist religions and conservative religious bodies which have less appeal to the underprivileged, who are the men who organized and supervise the religion, why they have done this, and the content and significance of the clash between ruling social-political forces and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Having ignored urgent matters and shown no genuine interest in, or sympathy for, the heart of his subject, the human-being Witness, Stroup has produced a typical contemporary scholarly project—no duller or better than thousands of other investigation reports which are all data and no sensitivity, insight, or mind.

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Nevertheless, for the reader with an ability to remain immune to the pendanticism and recognize the analytical shortcomings, this book can convey an outline-idea of what has happened and what is.

Founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses was Charles Taze Russell—although some members claim that the organization dates back to a time before the creation of the world. Russell was born in 1852 at Pittsburgh, Pa., where he lived a middle-class, typically drab existence. His mother died when he was nine. His father, to whom he was devoted, supplied him with private tutors. Later the two operated a chain of clothing stores. Russell was a Congregationalist and YMCA member, but for a reason not explained here, he became associated with the Second Adventists, a religious group composed of economically dispossessed persons in the middle eastern states.

In 1872 he established the organization later to be known as the Jehovah's Witnesses. The group's religious formula was that Satan, master of the earth, and Jehovah would soon fight each other, Jehovah inevitably being victor and enabling Jesus to return to rule the earth, where those who "believed" would have life, happiness and the abundant riches of the soil forever. Only the "faithful followers of Christ Jesus" among all the living would be saved.

A board of directors was instituted. Anyone who had contributed ten dollars to the society could vote for the board. But Russell was the real authority, issuing the orders, producing most of the literature. In 1919 the organization was moved to Brooklyn, where a printing plant was purchased. Only Witnesses were (and are) employed in the offices and the plant, working for food and shelter and receiving $20 a month allowance (now reduced to $10). Books and pamphlets sped from the presses. All money matters, too, were directly controlled by Russell, who issued little data about these, and declared he drew the regular worker-allowance, *plus* expense money, the figures of which were not announced. In 1913, in contradiction to the "teachings of the Bible," his wife divorced him, charging that his conceit, egotism, and domination were such as to make living intolerable for a sensitive woman.

When Russell died, Joseph Franklin Rutherford, legal advisor to the organization, was unanimously elected leader. The religion had been identified with Russell, followers often being termed "Russellites." Rutherford held that this was materialistic, and he encouraged use of the title "Jehovah's Witnesses." He decided (with the full support of his board of directors) that no more books by Russell would be published (so that today, according to Stroup, few Witnesses know Russell ever wrote any religious literature). Russell was "saintly," spoke like a spellbinder; Rutherford was silent, usually unseen, except at conventions. Russell toured frequently, delivering his message to potential believers in every part of the country; Rutherford often rested at the organization's palatial California estate, "Beth-Sharim," built to house Jesus and the prophets when they returned, but until then to be used by Rutherford. Russell sometimes spoke of the creation of an international socialist state conceived by man; Rutherford confined his stated and written expressions to the hereafter (although his hereafter, as Russell's, was to be comfortably materialistic). Russell recommended passive resistance to the aggressiveness of wicked men; Rutherford called for active resistance to evil.

After obtaining control, Rutherford intensified the despotic management initiated by his predecessor. When counsel Moyle (1938) wrote to the central office complaining that Rutherford often scolded and upbraided workers at Bethel House, Moyle was promptly fired. Rutherford maintained the rigid discipline in the "ranks," wrote or edited all of the literature, formulated the rules, sold the books and pamphlets at a higher price, and never released money figures. When Russell died, he bequeathed $200 in his will. When Rutherford died (1942) at Beth-Sarim, his will was kept a secret. No one outside of the ruling set knows how much money and property the late leader possessed.

Generalizations and narrative detail in the Bible are accepted by the Witnesses wholly and literally—but by way of the books of the leader and contents of the *Watch Tower* and *Consolation* magazines. At local meetings questions about Bible events are asked; answers are offered. Then the correct answer is derived from the current issue of the *Watch Tower*. Everyone is pleased and mentally at ease. While bitterly, continuously denouncing persons in all other religious and political organizations for meekly accepting what the "overlords" order, they themselves submit (or, more correctly, eagerly surrender) to a totalitarian system. They use the descriptions "clergy-class" and "commercial and political interests," persistently turning their criticism outward, yet not at any time applying a similar criticism to their own organization.

However, their submission to totalitarianism is an indirect, or unconscious, process; they arrive at such a condition by way of their certainty that Jesus is the executive officer under Jehovah, that the present, human leader may be identified with the supernatural directors, although on a comparatively minor level. "Jehovah," one Witness wrote to Rutherford, "has placed you in his mighty organization as the visible commander of his forces yet in the flesh. As for me, I am delighted to remain just a buck private in the ranks, and by Jehovah's grace continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with my brethern in this the greatest battle of the ages."

Since its founding, the society has been pyramidal, the power starting from the national headquarters (today, from the Brooklyn office of Nathan Knorr, about whom Stroup, strangely, has little to tell) and going downward, the lowest ruling power being the Brooklyn-appointees who control the local groups' activities, regularly insisting that more and more literature be sold.

Poor, exploited by the powerful and beaten and denounced by those who fear them, the Witnesses look toward a future which will include all that they cannot experience or benefit from today. Food will be plentiful. There will be no rich people (who will have been destroyed at the close of this civilization), no poverty, no sickness, no businesses, no tenements, no politicians. As far as one can see, colorful fragrant plants and large fruit-bearing trees will cover the land. The sun will shine forever. Men will live in harmony.

The dream of unhappy, frustrated modern man, too dynamic to crumble under the pain-pressure of profit-war society, yet not sufficiently enlightened to struggle for a rational alternative

JACOB H. JAFFE

BATTLE CRY

A lie for a lie,
Untruth for untruth:
this can be read
in the book of the dead;
make it your maxim
and load it with lead.

MILTON B. BABBITT

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THE RESISTANCE POETRY OF ARAGON AND ELUARD

by Ed Seldon

I. Louis Aragon

"Qu'on me donne le haut-parleur pour que mon cri au loin s'entende et, révélant le secret de la nouvelle église, dissipe le mensonge infâme au moment de se reformer: *Il n'y a de paradis d'aucune espèce!*"
—TRAITÉ DU STYLE (1928)
"L'ère des phrases mécaniques recommence . . ."
—LE CRÈVE-COEUR (1941)

LOUIS ARAGON has been impressing people for twenty-five years with his talents, which are numerous. He has written some swell surrealistic rhetoric, some really quite skillful novels, and at least one memorable line of poetry—at least Gide, whom Aragon has often attacked, praised it. In the twenties he punched a number of people in the nose who doubtless ought to have been punched in the nose. In the thirties he punched more people in the nose, including most of his friends of the twenties. During the Spanish War he sublimated his gifts of invective, traveling behind the Republican lines with a sound-truck. A member of the Communist Party, he answered his country's call to the colors in 1939, and for the duration of the Hitler-Stalin pact wrote the melancholy lyrics of *Le Crève-Coeur* and *Les Yeux D'Elsa.* These were extravagantly admired in England and America as well as in France, being almost the only French poetry published abroad since the start of the war. Highbrow critics reflected that the facile musicality of these poems was, after all, musicality; that their echoes of Rimbaud and Apollinaire were, after all, distinguished echoes; that the nineteenth century aesthetic of the poet reaffirmed, at least, his country's cultural heritage.

With this latest book of verses we have the post-pact Aragon, the principal poet of the French Resistance*. It has been extravagantly praised in France, from *Figaro* to the Stalinist *Carrefour.* I doubt it will be as highly praised abroad. For one thing, the war in Europe is over. For another thing, the echoes of Rimbaud and Apollinaire have been replaced by echoes of Ronsard and La Pléiade. And finally, *La Diane Française* is principally a collection of patriotic pieces for recitation, narrowly nationalist in the worst tradition.

The poet laureate of the French Communist Party does not place the occupation or resistance to it as part of a larger war. He is not concerned, as Eluard is, with discovering revolutionary content in the experience of the occupation years. The historical appeals are to a sentimental middle ages (French), to Jesus Christ, Valmy, Kléber.

The introductory prose-poem, with its refrain, "De si loin qu'on se souvînt . . ." is a National Anthology piece, very good of its kind, the sort of speech Barrès could have composed for his final plea:

"Mon pays arrivait dans la nuit vers les régions où commence la lumière, il pressentait l'aurore, il savait qu'elle est un combat, qu'elle a dans sa pâleur des sanglots et du sang . . ."

In "Le conscrit des cent villages" a whole poem is constructed around a hundred place-names in an orgy of prepared responses such as modern poetry has not seen before. There is also a pseudo-folk celebration of the brave Communist deputy, Gabriel Péri:

Dans le cimetière d'Ivry
Quoi qu'on fasse et quoi qu'on efface
Le vent qui passe aux gens qui passent
Dit un nom Gabriel Péri

while the astonishing choice of a stanza form I am afraid to identify other than by its rhyme-scheme, which is aababa, has been made for a tribute to the Maquis. This is the poem with the image "Les enfants couleur de patrie". An image which I recommend, along with the following couplet, as best concretizing that basic sloppiness of sensibility in Aragon which, together with what a French critic, Léon-Paul Gros, has called his "mentalité de journaliste à grand tirage", demonstrate why he has never, for all his talent and ambition, become a great writer:

L'étalon Liberté crevant l'écran de toile
Dante sort de l'enfer et revoit les étoiles

Aragon is the most popular contemporary poet in France. The Communist Party of France is very nearly the most popular, and certainly potentially the most powerful political force. Some sort of apotheosis, then, is surely reached in the concluding poem of *La Diane Française*, wherein Aragon pays tribute to his party. I am quoting the entire poem:

DU POETE A SON PARTI

Mon parti m'a rendu mes yeux et ma mémoire
Je ne savais plus rien de ce qu'un enfant sait
Que mon sang fût si rouge et mon coeur fût français
Je savais seulement que la nuit était noire
Mon parti m'a rendu mes yeux et ma mémoire

Mon parti m'a rendu le sens de l'épopée
Je vois Jeanne filer Roland sonne le cor
C'est le temps des héros qui renaît au Vercors
Les plus simple des mots font le bruit des épées
Mon parti m'a rendu le sens de l'épopée.

Mon parti m'a rendu les couleurs de la France
Mon parti mon parti merci de tes leçons
Et depuis ce temps-là tout me vient en chansons
La colère et l'amour la joie et la souffrance
Mon parti m'a rendu les couleurs de la France.

II. Paul Eluard

"Ruine du public
Son émotion est en morceaux
Son enthousiasme à l'eau
Les parures suspendues aux terreurs de la foudre."
—COMME UNE IMAGE (1929)

"Le poème désensibilise l'Univers au seul profit des facultés humaines, permet à l'homme de voir autrement,

*"La Diane Francaise," by Louis Aragon. Collection Poesie 44. Ed. Pierre Seghers. Paris December 1944.

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d'autres choses. Son ancienne vision est morte, ou fausse. Il découvre un nouveau monde, il devient un nouvel homme."

—DONNER À VOIR (1939)

No other living poet offers his readers a richer feast of contemporary sensibility and intelligence than Paul Eluard, or a more impressive example of fidelity to one's gifts. He *is* a poet, the way a tree is a tree, and he has been a poet, a marvellous poet, since 1917. He was in the thick of Dadaism, he was one of the founders and certainly the most gifted writer of the Surrealist movement. A revolutionary in politics as well as aesthetics, he has probably been connected with more significant (and insignificant) controversies, more arch-intellectual shenanigans, banishments, witch-hunts, jeux d'esprit, ivory towers, coteries, inquests, maledictions and suicides (of life, talent, or both) than any other first-rate writer of his time. If he has enemies, they have remained very silent in a country where a man is as famous for his enmities as for his friendships—and Eluard's friendships are famous. A Stalinist fellow-traveler since 1936, Eluard's poetry and other writings yield little or nothing to which a non-Stalinist revolutionary can take exception, and much that even a liberalized College of Commissars would have to overlook before awarding a red hat.

Paul Eluard is a great contemporary. His poetry is at once as personal and as impersonal as a mirror. His vision celebrates the despair and the hope of our world as the revolutionary knows it. His work is as hermetic and as accessible as that of a prophet in an age of religion. And not least important, he has the indispensable gift of originality.

The poems of *Poésie et Véritée* and *Au Rendez-vous Allemand** were written during the period of the German occupation and appeared either clandestinely or pseudonymically (Jean du Haut, Maurice Hervent) in France, or in numerous foreign editions (Switzerland, England, Algeria). Eluard has appended notes to the poems explaining their occasional or commemorative character, and includes three of his poems written during the Spanish War, to which these later poems are naturally linked.

These poems are only as simple or as complex as the man who reads them:

Les pauvres ramassaient leur pain dans le ruisseau
Leur regard couvrait la lumière
Et ils n'avaient plus peur la nuit
Très faibles leur faiblessse les faisait sourire
Dans le fond de leur ombre ils emportaient leur corps
Ils ne se voyaient plus qu'à travers leur détresse
Ils ne se servaient plus que d'un langage intime
Et j'entendais parler doucement prudemment
D'un ancien espoir grand comme la main

J'entendais calculer
Les dimensions multipliées de la feuille d'automne
La fonte de la vague au sein de la mer calme
J'entendais calculer
Les dimensions multipliées de la force future.

—LA DERNIÈRE NUIT (1942)

Quite as truly as his earlier ones, these poems follow the aesthetic principle that the poet is not the inspired one, but he who inspires. Behind his lyrical abandon, behind the magical manipulation of simple symbols, there is always an incitement, a stiffening of resolve, an arming of the reader's spirit. The poems will only be complete when the reader will have left them, and undertaken action. Horror is exorcized, the enemy rendered less fearsome, only so far as the impure purpose of this purest of poets allows:

On a calculé la peine
Qu'on peut faire à un enfant
Tant de honte sans vomir
Tant de larmes sans périr

Un bruit de pas sous la voûte
Noire et béate d'horreur
On vient déterrer la plante
On vient avilir l'enfant

Par la misère et l'ennui

—LES SEPT POÈMES D'AMOUR EN GUERRE

. . . Devant leurs bergers
Imbibés de bière
Imbibés de lune
Chantant gravement
La chanson des bottes
Ils ont oublié
La joie d'être aimé
Quand ils disent oui
Tout leur répond non
Quand ils parlent d'or
Tout se fait de plomb
Mais contre leur ombre
Tout se fera d'or
Tout rajeunira
Qu'ils partent qu'ils meurent
Leur mort nous suffit.

—BÊTES ET MÉCHANTS

In the resistance verse of Aragon the Germans are hated because they interrupt the unrestricted use of words like France, patrie, mon pays, etc. In the poetry of Eluard the Germans are hated because they destroy liberty, are cruel to their victims, and kill his, Eluard's, friends. Aragon asks the Frenchman to rise against the Germans because he is French. Eluard describes what the Germans do, and its meaning, and offers glimpses of a world without masters:

Nous jetons le fagot des ténèbres au feu
Nous brisons les serrures rouillées de l'injustice
Des hommes vont venir qui n'ont plus peur d'eux-mêmes
Car ils sont sûrs de tous les hommes
Car l'ennemi à figure d'homme disparaît.

—LA DERNIÈRE NUIT

As he incites resistance, he imagines what soldiers of such an uprising might be like, after citing "La morale de fin du monde/Des oppresseurs":

Des guerriers selon l'espoir
Selon le sens de la vie
Et la commune parole
Selon la passion de vaincre
Et de réparer le mal
Qu'on nous a fait

Des guerriers selon mon coeur
Celui-ci pense à la mort
Celui-là n'y pense pas

*"Au Rendez-vous Allemand" and "Poesie et Verite 1942," by Paul Eluard. Les Editions de Minuit. Paris, April 1945.

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L'un dort l'autre ne dort pas
Mais tout font le même rêve
Se libérer
Chacun est l'ombre de tous.
—LES ARMES DE LA DOULEUR

Clearly, the poems of this collection are not the best poems he has written. Too many are too occasional, or too hurried. The earlier ones of *Poésie et Vérité* are more likely to take a permanent place in his work than all but a few of those in the later volume. The most effective single poem of *Au Rendez-vous Allemand* is the "Critique de la Poesie" which has been printed in *Horizon.* Another very moving one is "Comprenne qui Voudra" written in defense of the unfortunate women whose hair was cut off by their compatriots because they had slept with German soldiers.

This collection of Eluard's work would be valuable, if for nothing else, as a rare example of a serious poet succeeding, without dislocation of his intelligence or his sensibility, in assimilating as personal experience and as a source for poetry some of the most intractable and painful events of our times. It was his fellow-poets Breton was addressing in the famous aphorism, "We should carry ourselves as though we were really in the world."

ED SELDON

The Intelligence Office

DECADENCE OF THE WORLD WORKINGCLASS

Sir:

While hastening to support Peter Meyer's formulation of the problem of the lack of mass German working class resistance to Fascism, I am sorry that he, especially, did not expand his fomulation. I would have expected that, with his emphasis on the struggle for social liberation, he would naturally have included in his statement of the problem a consideration of the failure of the Russian workers to develop any significant opposition that we know of to totalitarian collectivism.

Conditions of the masses of workers and peasants in Russia are not less oppressive than were conditions under Fascism in Germany (and under Allied rule today). It is abundantly clear that the situation of the ruled masses in Russia in the next 20 years at least will be indescribable—with Stakhanovism and piece-work pushed at a furious pace, with pitifully low stocks of the necessities of living decreased even further by channelization of huge chunks of production into the maintenance of vast armed forces and military "research." Russia is—economically speaking—ripe for fundamental social change. Have there been any signs of this in the last ten or 12 years? (Note that the so-called "conspiracies" of the opposition within the bureaucracy which led to the Moscow Inquisitions of 1934 and 1936 cannot be considered as mass movements in any sense.)

There is a problem to solve. But it resolves itself to more than inquiring into the why and wherefore of the debacle of the "greatest, most numerous, most class-conscious and best organized working class in Europe." From a class-analytical viewpoint, the real question——as it always must—transcends national boundaries and becomes instead: What has happened to the social vitality of the world working class? Why do the masses all over the globe no longer seem capable of initiating anything new aimed at their own self-liberation? What has happened to the political expression of basic humanitarian values by the oppressed classes? What can one think when the Gallup Poll reports that 85% of the American and 77% of the Canadian "people" emphatically favor the use of the atomic bomb? Or the statement made in your soldier-correspondent's letter from Sudetenland: "If we had been ordered immediately into an attack on the Russians, we all would have bitched our heads off—and gone on."

This is a Gordian knot. I'd like to see Peter Meyer or some other POLITICS writers at least cut, if they can't untie it.

MONTREAL, CANADA A READER.

CONTRIBUTORS

Simone Weil died in 1943 at the age of thirty-four. "The Iliad, or the Poem of Force" was written in Marseille, whither she had fled after the German occupation of Paris. For a brief account of this extraordinary woman, see the biographical note appended to her "Reflections on War" (POLITICS, February, 1945) . . . **Mary McCarthy,** author of "The Company She Keeps", is now teaching at Bard College . . . **"Ricardo"** is a refugee economist now in England . . . **Martin Hasseck** is a young socialist who works as a draughtsman for a British aircraft factory . . . **"European"** played a part in the 1905 revolution, is an editor, journalist, and scholar whose special interests are Hellenistic and Byzantine history . . . **"Gallicus"** is a European newspaper-man who is now in India. His "Hitler: the Liberals' 'Indispensable Man'" appeared in the January 1945 POLITICS . . . **Nathan Glazer** is on the editorial staff of "Commentary" . . . **Jacob H. Jaffe** is a young C.O. who lives in New York City and works on a trade journal . . . **Milton B. Babbitt** has been a member of the Princeton faculty since 1938, "normally in the Music Dept. but during the war in Mathematics"; he won a Bearns prize in musical composition in 1941, and has written a book, soon to be published, on the twelve-tone system . . . **Ed Seldon** is a critic and drama student who has been in the Army several years and is now stationed in Paris.

Comment

"Who Killed Carlo Tresca?"

The Tresca Memorial Committee has just put out a pamphlet, "Who Killed Carlo Tresca?", which should be of interest to readers of POLITICS. It is almost three years since Carlo Tresca, perhaps the best-known figure in the modern anarchist movement in this country, was murdered by a gunman on the streets of New York City. The police have made no progress towards solving the murder. In his last years, Tresca took the lead in the Italian-American community in fighting against totalitarianism, Communist as well as Fascist. He had plenty of political enemies, and plenty of friends, and both did credit to his generous humanity. The present pamphlet, which has prefaces by Arturo Giovannitti and John Dos Passos, gives the complete story of the case for the first time, making the sensational revelation that the Assistant District Attorney in charge of the Italian end of the case was closely associated with Fascists in the past and was the recipient of Fascist honors and awards. *Copies may be obtained from the Tresca Me-*

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morial Committee, Room 905, 112 *East* 19 *St., New York City; at* 10c *each,* $8 *for* 100.

"Labor Imperialism" The two reports from England printed elsewhere in this issue are confirmations of the prediction I made at the end of my article (September) on the British Labor Party's antisocialist foreign policy: "We may hope for further educational results." That article was a deplorably unconstructive one, in contrast to the great hopes the Marxists and Liblabs expressed when the Labor Party won its electoral victory. ("Can you really see *nothing* progressive in the victory of the Labor Party?" plaintively wrote one reader.)

If anything, I was too kind to the Labor Government. I expected its conservatism to be expressed mostly in the field of foreign policy, while a mild progressivism would be shown at home. The refusal—in violation of the most solemn pre-election pledges—to let the harried Jews of Europe move into Palestine, this merely carries out the Bevin pattern. But in its first important moves in domestic policy, the new Government has shown the same spirit.

The first Labor budget, which Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Dalton presented to Commons on October 23, turned out to be an almost exact copy of the tax legislation our own very conservative Congress has just enacted: the 100% wartime excess profits tax was reduced to 60%; income taxes were cut in all brackets; Government spending was held down. Churchill rose after Dalton had read the budget and congratulated him—as did, the next day, Dalton's Tory predecessor, Sir John Anderson—describing the budget as "bland, mild and temperate" and one "that would do no harm, if it did no good." The *N. Y. Times* reported: "Stock Exchange traders, with the rest of the business community, held that the document was singularly lacking in radicalism."

To Ricardo's account of the Bank of England nationalization might be added the *N. Y. Times* report of Oct. 10 emphasizing the amicable spirit in which this Stride Forward to Socialism was accomplished. Lord Catto, the present Governor of the Bank, will be also the first Governor of the nationalized institution, thus preserving that famous "continuity of policy" which Bevin has stressed in the foreign field. Nay more—"At Mr. Dalton's request, Lord Catto presided yesterday at a meeting of the Clearing Bankers Association, at which the terms of the new bill were considered. Later, Lord Catto assured the Chancellor that he could count on the co-operation of the banking community."

To Martin Hasseck's story of the dock strike, two additions may be made. First, as this goes to press (Oct. 28), the strike is going stronger than ever, more than three weeks after its beginning; 10,000 troops are now unloading ships; and on Oct. 26, the strike spread to Ireland when Belfast dockers refused to unload ships that had been loaded by military labor. Second, a vital issue in this strike—as in our own New York stevedores' strike—is the men's hostility towards the whole repressive trade union apparatus. Those in control of this apparatus have reacted with a firmness they never show towards the employers. Despite the bad effects on the country's already scanty food supply, the new Labor Government has not only refrained from pressure on the shipowners, but has even refused the request of the strikers that it intervene! Minister of Labor Isaacs replied "that any representations to him must be made through the special channels of the trade unions." While Chairman Dukes of the Trades Union Congress declared: "You cannot have order in politics and anarchy in industry. Drop this idea that there is any shortcut to your problems . . . There is no better way . . . than through the constitutional machinery of the trade union." *Order in politics*—a pregnant formulation, recalling Bevin's concern for "law and order" abroad. Would that the anarchy in industry were more widespread: only thus will the British workers escape the orderly demise, by short rations or by World War III, the constitutional machinery for which Britain's first workingclass government is now perfecting.

Liberals & the Military (I) Last summer Conrad Lynn, the lawyer who, with his brother, brought the Lynn Case to test Army jimcrow policies, submitted an article to *The New Republic.* The article described his experience in a racially mixed unit in the Army, its point being that the enlisted men spontaneously broke down color barriers while the officers did their best to keep the races apart. The editor with whom he dealt told him they liked the piece and would probably use it. However, he presently got it back from them. At the top of the first page, the following was rubber-stamped:

> Publication is objected to on
> grounds of Military Security or Policy
> 10 Aug. 1945 (2)
> *War Department, Bureau of Public Relations*

The editor Lynn saw told him that the magazine through the war had followed a policy of submitting to the War Department, in advance of publication, all articles dealing with the Army. This was a voluntary arrangement, he added, and the Army's views on the publishability of a given article naturally had some weight—in this case, apparently, decisive weight.

These comments seem in order: (1) the readers of *The New Republic,* so far as either Lynn or myself know at least, have never been informed of this arrangement (the daily press at least had the decency to print "passed by the censor" at the head of its war dispatches); (2) as the wording of the rubber-stamp shows, not even the elastic concept of "military security" was necessarily involved—and certainly was not involved in Lynn's article; all the Army had to do was simply to . . . . object; (3) the editors of this liberal weekly, of their own free will without any legal compulsion, gave the Army, of all institutions, the privilege of being "judge in its own cause."

Note: The above was shown in advance to the editors of "The New Republic", and they were invited to make any comment they wanted to. Their reply follows:

> *The facts as stated in your editorial are correct. The following observations apply to your comments.*
>
> (1) *It did not seem necessary to tell our readers during the war that we placed a high value on military security and hence would be careful not to publish information which might aid the enemy. The fact that war news was censored was generally known.*
>
> (2) *We cannot accept your conclusion that military security was certainly not involved in Lynn's article. Publicity for bad racial relationships in our Army might legitimately be so regarded. In addition, in cases where a member of the Army did not submit a contribution to his superior officer it was our custom*

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to clear it with the War Department in order to protect the writer. This was the case with the Lynn article

(3) *Any loyal citizen must during war consult military authorities where a question of military security might be involved. We have, however, published numerous articles and communications critical of the Army without submitting them to the War Department, because in our judgment military security was not in question.*

Sincerely yours,

OCT. 23, 1945 THE EDITORS

Liberals & the Military (2) Last spring Kurt List wrote an article for *Common Sense* on the Army's Special Services Division, which distributes books, movies, music, stage shows and other cultural material to the armed forces. The article was written after consultation with the editors, List being at the time in charge of a regular department for *Common Sense*—he has since resigned. List criticised the SSD's efforts as being esthetically bad, politically reactionary, and to some extent psychologically injurious. The article was scheduled for publication in July.

Then a Lieutenant Price of the SSD appeared on the horizon. He called up List and asked him to withdraw the article, on the grounds that the SSD conceived of itself as a morale-building rather than a cultural agency, that its job was just to give the boys "what they wanted", and hence that it was illogical to criticise it in serious terms. These arguments did not impress List. But the article was not printed in July and finally, on August 27 List got a note from Varian Fry, the editor of *Common Sense*, stating that Lieutenant Price had been in to see him, and that he (Fry) had been convinced by Price that, since the SSD did not consider itself a cultural agency, the whole basis of List's article was unsound, and that the article therefore would not be printed.

To this List replied that the SSD dealt with books, music, and other cultural fields, and that if it were to be exempted from serious criticism simply because it claimed to be interested in something else, he did not see how Fry "could allow criticism of concert managers, art galleries, publishers, etc., all institutions which dispense culture but, if asked, will surely consider themselves only profit-making enterprises." (I might add that the Price-Fry reasoning is exactly that of the soldier last month who objected to my criticism of Patton's D-Day-Minus-One Speech because the speech was intended for an audience of soldiers, not civilians.) Editor Fry, however, simply reiterated his agreement with Lieutenant Price, to whom he gave credit for pointing out to him "a fundamental flaw in the argument" of List's article.

I don't mean to suggest that this refusal, by a magazine which is generally considered more independently critical of the war and the military than the liberal weeklies, to publish a long-accepted article was due to any conscious yielding to Army pressure. On the other hand, it does seem odd that a presumably experienced editor like Varian Fry should have to depend on an outside party—and a keenly partisan one at that—to point out a "fundamental flaw" —and a very dubious flaw at that—in an article by one of his regular contributors. Perhaps Freud—rather than Marx —could enlighten us on this enigma.

(*As in the case of "Liberals & the Military* (1)", *the above was sent to the interested party, the editor of "Common Sense." No reply has been received.*)

THANKS - and We Need More!

Last month we ran the appeal that follows. The response from our readers was prompt and generous—over 100 *are now sending regular packages (several are organizing groups to send* 20, 30, 50 *packages a month), almost* $500 *has been received in cash, and every day's mail brings half a dozen more offers of help.*

This is a fine start—and we want to thank warmly those who have made it—but we still have European families as yet uncared for on our list. And our friends abroad are sending in more. So, if you haven't filled out the blank below, please do so if you feel you can give the time and money for package-sending.

We have collected from our own files and from friends of the magazine, the addresses of a number of families abroad who desperately need food and clothing this winter. These people are fighters for the ideals the readers of "Politics" believe in. Some of them have returned from years of imprisonment in German concentration and even death camps, all of them have suffered and struggled for OUR cause. They are Socialists, Trotskyists, Anarchists, leftists of every shade. They are French, Italian, Dutch, German, etc.

There is no point in sending them money, since money will buy little in Europe today. (It costs $20 to get a pair of shoes resoled in France.) Food, clothing, soap, needles and thread—this is what is needed.

WILL YOU UNDERTAKE TO SEND FOOD PACKAGES REGULARLY TO A EUROPEAN FAMILY?

If so, fill out the blank below and we will send you one of the names in our files, together with full instructions as to size and weight allowed, how to mail, foods most needed, etc. We hope to arrange for each family to receive one food package a week (the maximum permitted). You may undertake to mail once a week, twice a month, or once a month, **depending on the time and money you can spare.** (The cost of each package, of course, depends on what you include. An average price, including postage, would run around $5.)

If you cannot, for any reason, send packages yourself, send us the money and we will buy the supplies and mail them ourselves.

Nothing will be spent for administration. Every penny will go for food. A group of people close to the magazine have undertaken to do, voluntarily, all the clerical work involved, and to mail out packages for such "Politics" readers as cannot mail them themselves.

P. S. It is hoped that, in addition to mailing packages to "your" family, you will also be able to correspond with them. Letters from people over here, we know from experience, are eagerly welcomed by Europeans, who have for years been cut off from contact with the rest of the world. By your packages, by your letters, you can show them that they are not forgotten, that they have friends over here, and that international fraternity is not completely destroyed.

Politics, 45 Astor Place, New York 3, N. Y.

I want to help.

☐ Please send me the address of a European family, plus full mailing instructions. I will undertake to send them .....package(s) a month.

☐ I enclose $..... to pay for food packages. I will undertake to send you $..... a month to keep up the flow of packages this winter.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

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Announcement

A number of readers have suggested that some form of contact between the readers and writers of POLITICS more immediate than the printed page might be enjoyable and useful. We are therefore initiating a series of Friday Evening Discussion Meetings. If these seem to fill some need for all of us, there will be other meetings later on. The opening series will be:

Questions We Have in Common

Nov. 30—**Dwight Macdonald:** "The Root Is Man" (preview).

Dec. 7—**Louis Clair:** The Failure of the European Resistance, and what it suggests about modern social change.

Dec. 14—**Nicola Chiaromonte:** Socialism Should Be Utopian, not Scientific.

Dec. 25—**Paul Goodman:** Decentralization.

Dec. 28—**Frank Fisher:** Are Political Parties Obsolete?

Jan. 4—**Lionel Abel:** The General Acceptance-in-Advance of World War III—and what it means politically.

TIME: 8:30 (sharp).

PLACE: Stuyvesant Casino, 142 Second Avenue (near 8th St.), New York City.

Since a discussion rather than a lecture is the object, the speakers will limit their original presentations to about half an hour.

Admission 25c. *Course ticket* $1.

THE RUSSIAN ENIGMA
by
Anton Ciliga

This book, first published in France in 1938 under the title, "Au Pays du Grand Mensonge", is one of the most important studies of Soviet Russian society ever made.

The author, a Yugoslavian Communist, lived in Russia as a worker and Party member for ten years: 1926-1936. He describes in intimate detail the Russia of the NEP period, of the Trotsky-Stalin struggle, and of the first Five Year Plan. The latter half of the book is a fascinating and unique description of prison life in Russia.

The special value of Ciliga's book, apart from its material, is that it describes Soviet life from the viewpoint of a revolutionary-socialist worker who participated in it.

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